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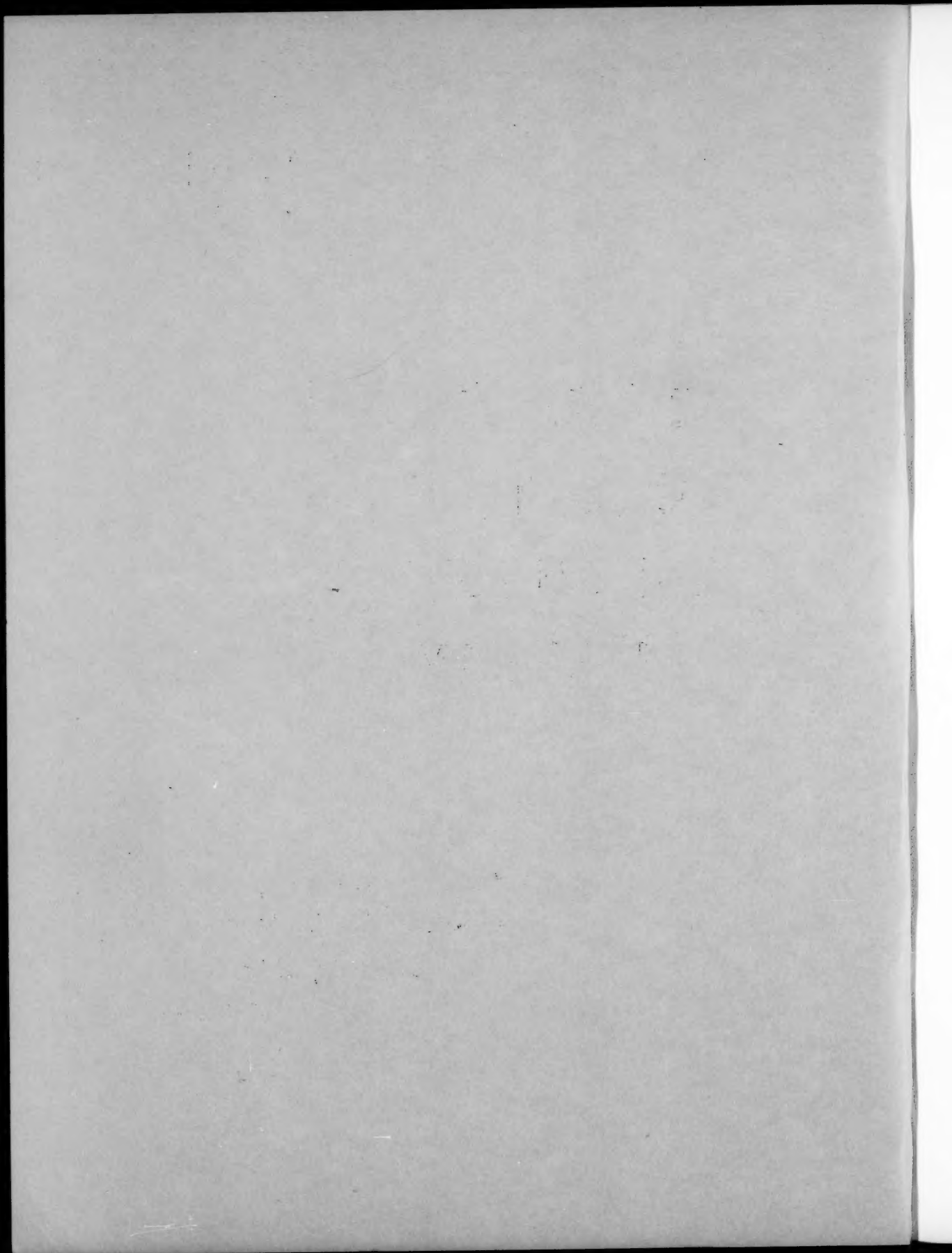
Volume VIII

Number 3

**KENTUCKY
FOREIGN
LANGUAGE
QUARTERLY**

**Published by the Department
of Modern Foreign Languages**

**University of Kentucky
Lexington**



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FOREIGN LANGUAGE
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Volume VIII

Third Quarter

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Contents

Elementos barrocos en la lírica del "vulgo"	Francisco Herrera y Sánchez	. 107
Romain Gary: Witness to an Era	Andrée M. Kail	. 115
Machiavelli in <u>Belfagor</u>	Gilberto Paolini	. 120
The Grandeur Fades: Rutilius Namatianus	Henry C. Schnur	. 129
Existentialist Resolution of Conflicts in Unamuno	Edward James Schuster	. 134
Four <u>Chroniques</u> of Jean Giono	Maxwell A. Smith	. 140
Style and Form of Hermann Hesse's <u>Unterm Rad</u>	Frederick H. Willecke	. 147
Recent Books in the Field of Romance Languages and Literatures	Phillip A. Duncan	. 157
Books Received 161

Published by

Department of Modern Foreign Languages
University of Kentucky
Lexington, Kentucky

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The Kentucky Foreign Language Quarterly appears four times a year, and is devoted to all aspects of the study and teaching of ancient, medieval, and modern foreign languages.

Annual subscription: \$2.00 (U.S.) for North America and the Caribbean Islands; \$3.00 elsewhere. Single copies \$1.00.

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ELEMENTOS BARROCOS EN LA LÍRICA DEL "VULGO"

By Francisco Herrera y Sánchez, West Virginia University

En la "Introducción" a la Historia general de las literaturas hispánicas, el insigne Ramón Menéndez Pidal discutiendo una de las características de nuestra literatura bajo el título de "Arte de Mayorías,"¹ presenta la interesantísima generalización de que la literatura española tiene como uno de sus elementos primarios, el de ser literatura mayoritaria y que por lo tanto es dirigida a la comprensión del público medio--es decir que no es literatura para todo el pueblo sino para un grupo escogido de éste.

Nosotros incluiríamos en este grupo muy pocos del público medio si nos limitáramos a considerar solamente la literatura más selecta, como la del Siglo de Oro con su conceptismo, su culteranismo y su consiguiente barroco. Diríamos entonces que la literatura española es dirigida a una minoría muy selecta y por lo tanto insinuaríamos que los elementos literarios que estas obras contienen serían solamente para este y de este grupo. Pero aceptando tal teoría en su totalidad erraríamos en parte porque algunos de los elementos sobresalientes en la literatura mayoritaria se hallan no solamente en la literatura del pueblo, sino también en la del "vulgo." A este gran caudal de espontánea expresión verbal, que tal vez no debiéramos llamar literatura por no ofender a los literatos que habitan la ya famosísima torre de marfil, se le aplica, por los que prefieren ignorarla, el nombre de "folklore," y hay otros que con desdén la rechazan completamente o la consideran como disparates del "vulgo."

El mismo Menéndez Pidal expresó este desdén en 1919 al repetir el epigrama de Menéndez y Pelayo que "los cantos del pueblo, si son populares, no son buenos, y si son buenos, no son populares."² Esta opinión y otras semejantes no las debemos de aceptar como juicio final, porque haciéndolo nos pondríamos en un atajo y cerraríamos los ojos a otras veredas que conducen de una brotación artística a otra.

Al mismo tiempo nos olvidaríamos de que al lado del arte poético mayoritario y minoritario español ha habido y hay una corriente literaria que les ha servido y les sirve de complemento. Nos olvidaríamos de que la tercera corriente es tan esencialmente española como las otras dos y nos cegaríamos al hecho de que muchas veces estas dos primeras se han servido de la tercera como nutrimento esencial para su madurez. Y si no ¿a qué debe su fama, en gran parte, La Celestina y otras obras maestras de la literatura española?

Además Menéndez Pidal se contradice cuando escribe, "Hay que . . . considerar la enorme coacción que sobre el individuo ejercen las ideas y sentimientos de sus coetáneos, y más aún, de sus antepasados."³ No podemos

muy fácilmente aceptar la tesis que "las ideas y sentimientos" a las que se refiere Menéndez Pidal, influyen solamente a la minoría o a la mayoría. Porque los sentimientos no son patrimonio de un grupo selecto sino que pertenecen a todos los hombres aunque sean estos sentimientos más o menos hondos.

También afirma don Ramón, refiriéndose a los elementos primordiales de nuestra literatura, que "es preciso que entre ambos grupos/medie una fuerza vinculatoria formada por un sinnúmero de elementos psicológicos que no pertenecen a cada uno en particular, sino en común ."⁴

Nosotros creemos que la "fuerza vinculatoria" a la que se refiere don Ramón sin mencionarla directamente es esa corriente artística a la que nos referíamos anteriormente, puesto que afirma don Ramón que "esos elementos psíquicos comunes, aunque dependen siempre de actos individuales, son de elaboración colectiva y tradicional."⁵ Si estos elementos son comunes y tradicionales no pueden pertenecer a uno ni a dos grupos aislados porque los caracteres psicológicos son de todos. Pues ¿nos dice don Ramón que son "vinculatorios"? Por lo tanto tendremos que incluir en estos grupos al que llaman "el vulgo"--y especialmente porque es el más "tradicional" de los tres. Tampoco podemos admitir a razón el argumento de don Ramón de que los elementos literarios son del alma colectiva de un pueblo, porque entonces tendríamos que excluir las dos terceras partes del "pueblo" a las que pertenecen el hombre común y el "vulgo." ¿Quién se atrevería a hacer tal división especialmente cuando se trata de vocablos como común, individuales, tradicional, y elementos psíquicos?

Es nuestra opinión que si los historiadores literarios y los críticos estudiaran las producciones del "vulgo" con simpatía hallarían que brotan de un sentimiento psicológico común a todos los hombres y que los temas que emplean para expresar sus sentimientos no se diferencian mucho de los de los cultos. Para desarrollar esta tesis nos hemos propuesto probar que los elementos característicos del barroco, que son de los que se jactan más los cultos, se hallan también en las creaciones poéticas del "vulgo," y al mismo tiempo afirmamos que las corrientes históricas literarias no influyen exclusivamente a una minoría selecta.

Como el barroco está hoy día tan de moda, y por lo tanto bien comprendido, no nos será necesario dar más que una breve introducción histórica de como el barroco fué un desarrollo del nuevo espíritu adquirido por el hombre como una resulta de las influencias del Renacimiento que hizo al hombre el centro de interés en vez de ser un monigote espiritual y político. Esta tendencia individualista del Renacimiento en relación con el ambiente de misticismo del siglo XVI conduce al hombre a examinarse y le lleva al descubrimiento del maravilloso contenido que encierra y que le hace obrar. De este descubrimiento brotan los elementos individualistas que nos presenta la actitud barroca y como

consecuencia los temas que expresan su actitud--la filosofía ante la vida y las formas de expresarla.

En este estudio nos limitaremos a subrayar la filosofía ante la vida, y de vez en cuando la manera de expresarla, elementos que se hallan no solamente en el arte barroco del culto sino también en el del "vulgo." Para comprobar nuestra tesis asentaremos primero el elemento característico del Barroco y después el ejemplo que expresa la misma característica en lo del "vulgo." ⁶

1. El Barroco "arranca en parte de los mismos fundamentos psicológicos" que lleva el hombre en el fondo de su alma y le atraen a experimentar el misterio de la naturaleza y a analizar su propia cultura. ⁷

Sacan a un pez del agua
Y al punto es muerto,
Por verse separado
De su elemento.
Yo soy lo mismo,
Así que me separan
De tu cariño. ⁸

2. El Barroco contiene la ley del contraste. ⁹

A. Pena y alegría:

Chiquiyo, no me larmientes;
Que como la quiero tanto,
Fatigas me dan de muerte.

B. El contraste por paralelismo:

Por ti me olvidé de Dios
Por ti la gloria perdí,
Y ahora me voy a quedar
Sin Dios, sin gloria y sin ti.

3. El Barroco contiene "la huida de la visión natural, de lo común y equilibrado." ¹⁰

A la muerte yamo,
No quiere bení;
Que hasta la muerte tiene,
Lástima de mí.

* * *

En er sementerio entré;
Le dije ar seporturero . . .
Si hay un sitio señala'o
Pa' los que mueren queriendo.

4. El Barroco brota de "una lucha de contrarios . . . de los impulsos de la naturaleza sobre lo propiamente natural."¹¹

En el retrete oscuro
De la memoria,
Repasaba un amante
Pasadas glorias,
Y así decía:
No quiero entristecerme
Con alegrías.

5. El Barroco emplea los colores "buscando los efectos de contraste."¹²

Ar subí la escala,
Le ijo ar berdugo
Que le quitara la túnica blanca,
Lo pusiera de luto.

En lo que me entretengo
Cuando estoy triste,
Es en oler la rosa
Que tu me diste.
Aunque está seca,
Me acuerdo de los tiempos
Que estaba fresca.

6. El Barroco es la poesía de sentidos y de pensamientos.¹³

Entre la hostia y er cáli
A mi Dios se lo pedí:
;Que t'ajoguen las fatigas
Como m'ajogan a mí!

Amor resucitado
Yo no lo quiero,
Porque siempre a mortaja
Me estará oliendo.
Y yo me asusto
De las cosas que vienen
Del otro mundo.

7. El Barroco emplea medios comparativos para conseguir una moralización.¹⁴

Más mata una mala lengua
Que las manos der berdugo;
Que el berdugo mata a un hombre;
Una mala lengua a muchos.

No murmures de nadie
Aunque mal vieres;
Date una vuelta y mira
Lo que tú eres.
Date una vuelta,
Y repara aquel charco
Que está en tu puerta.

8. El Barroco "evita el presentar . . . directamente a las cosas con un sentido nominalista." ¹⁵

Con er jaleo y el ole,
Las muchachas de hoy en día
Se lo isen a los hombre'.

Yo no sé por dónde
Ni por dónde no,
Se me ha lia'o esta soguita al cuerpo
Sin saberlo yo.

9. El Barroco envuelve el tema "con una verdadera corteza de ricos y complicados planos verbales." ¹⁶

No me mires, que miran
Que nos miramos;
Miremos la manera
De no mirarnos;
No nos miremos,
Y cuando no nos miren
Nos miraremos.

Un gitano se encontraba
Con un remiendo,
Que se le había enconao
En los carsones que yevaba,
Le'an sali'o sartane',
En er ala der sombrero,
Y en la' medias parapane,
En er chalero un niñoero.
Y un fuerte dolo'de muelas
Que en un sapato sentía,
Y en er camisó' viruelas
Y en la faja feresía.

10. El Barroco salta "del plano real al irreal por la completa sustitución de términos." ¹⁷

Cuando bayas a la iglesia,
Ponte un belito 'n la cara;
Que los santos, con ser santos,
De los artares se bajan.

11. El Barroco contiene metáforas que "aun refiriéndose predominantemente a elementos de la naturaleza . . . hacen relación a facultades o características humanas." ¹⁸

Arrímate a mi queré,
Como las salamanquesas
S'arriman a la paré.

Como la tortolita
Te andube buscando,
Compañerita, e olibo en olibo,
E ramito en ramo.

A mí te quíes compará,
Siendo de tóos los metales
Y yo de un solo metá.

12. El Barroco tiene como una de sus características "el pesimismo, que en unos autores se presenta como una mueca, en otros en el aire reconcentrado de un pensamiento que estalla en un chiste." ¹⁹

A. Pesimismo:

Si er queré que puse en ti
Lo hubiera puesto en un perro,
Se biniera etrás e mí.

Er juramento mi niña
Lo escribió sobre l'arena,
Lo que en la arena se escribe
Biene 'l aire y se lo yeba.

B. Pensamiento que estalla en un chiste:

Chiquiya, bente conmigo,
Que no te fartará na'a . . .
Para andar encueros bibo'.

La mardesfa e tu mare
Te quiere meter a monja . . .
En un convento de frailes.

13. El Barroco expresa "la tesis de la desvalorización de la soberbia." ²⁰

Le'ijo er Tiempo ar queré:
--Esa soberbia que tienes
yo te la castigaré.

Anda que te den un tiro,
Que te jases mu' persona
Y a la cara no te miro.

14. El Barroco se jacta de su "hondo pensamiento." ²¹

Pensamiento, ¿A'onde me yebas,
Que no te pue' o seguf?
No me metas en paraje
Donde no pue'a salf' ²²

15. Una de las características de la lírica barroca es el empleo de vocablos latinos y griegos ²³ que le da, en parte, esa obscuridad lingüística que nos turba; no menos hallamos en la lírica del "vulgo."

Cuando abiyo motas ²⁴ me quieres,
Y toftas tus arañas negras
Le piquan en er corasón
Y dises que no me aboreses.

16. El Barroco desarrolla el tema moral del desengaño de la vida. ²⁵

De yorá tengo canales,
En ber que por ti he perdfo
A mi pare y a mi mare.

Si se puede decir, como escribe Emilio Orozco Dfiaz, que "el Barroco

ha buscado en la plástica la representación de la realidad, no en lo quieto y durable, sino en lo más apasionado y violento del fluir de lo anímico y vital-- exaltando las fuerzas de lo humano y de la naturaleza sobre el plano de lo natural, "26 también tendremos que admitir, basando nuestra conclusión en lo deducido en este estudio, que la lírica del "vulgo" también ve el mundo con la misma perspectiva filosófica y la presenta tan contradictoria, tan inquieta, y tan revoltosa como la línea quebrada del barroco.

Además los elementos barrocos existentes en la lírica del "vulgo" subrayan lo que escribe Miguel Herrero García--que a la floración del barroco "marchan todos los movimientos artísticos, por severos y equilibrados que sean . . . No hay arte, plástico o verbal, que no camine hacia el barroco."27

También sabemos que el maestro de la lírica barroca, Don Luis de Góngora, hizo uso de lo popular, pues, escribe Emilio Orozco Díaz que "no es extraño que en este inclinarse hacia lo popular, su sensibilidad e instinto poético recree las formas populares hasta confundirse con ellas." 28

Fernán Caballero escribe en su colección, Cuentos y poesías populares:

Entre las distintas composiciones poéticas, hemos encontrado algunas cuya idea ha sido expresada también por poetas de alta esfera, como sucede con esta copla burlesca:

Glorioso San Sebastián,
Todo lleno de saetas,
Mi alma como la tuya,
Como tu cuerpo, mi suegra,

que se halla igualmente en la comedia de Montalván, Morir y disimular, en esta forma:

Glorioso San Sebastián,
Santo cabal y perfecto,
Mi alma como la tuya,
Como tu cuerpo, mi suegro.

Nos parece más probable que del pueblo subiese a Montalván esta copla . . . que inventa más fácilmente que aprende, e improvisa con más gusto y afición que repite.29

Si Fernán Caballero tiene razón y si es verdad que el Barroco "marca el término de una progresiva transformación artística," 30 ¿quién podrá confutar que el principio de este "termino" no fué la lírica del "vulgo" que es en su forma histórica muchísimo más antigua?

NOTES

1. Historia general de las literaturas hispánicas, bajo la dirección de Díaz-Plaja (Barcelona: Editorial Barna, 1949), I, XXIV.
2. Discurso acerca de la primitiva poesía lírica española (Madrid, 1919), pág. 9. Véase también mi estudio, "Arte y origen de las murgas callejeras," Kentucky Foreign Language Quarterly, VI,1(1959), 20-37.
3. Historia general, I, xvi.
4. Loc. cit.
5. Loc. cit.
6. Para apuntar los elementos del Barroco que presentamos nos hemos servido de los que se discuten en la Historia general de las literaturas hispánicas, III (1953).
7. Ibid., pág. 343.
8. Hemos escogido estos ejemplos de la colección de Antonio Machado y Alvarez, Cantes Flamencos (Buenos Aires: Austral, 1947).
9. Historia general, III, 444.
10. Ibid., pág. 343.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., pág. 347.
13. Ibid., pág. 348.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., pág. 351.
18. Ibid., pág. 352.
19. Ibid., pág. 427.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid., pág. 417.
22. Es interesantísimo notar que todos estos ejemplos de la lírica del "vulgo" nacieron en Andalucía que fué el centro del barroco batallante.
23. Historia general, III, 352-353.
24. abiyar motas = tener dinero.
25. Historia general, III, 385.
26. Ibid., pág. 341.
27. Ibid., pág. 24.
28. Ibid., pág. 358.
29. Fernán Caballero, Cuentos y poesías populares (Sevilla, 1859), pág. xiii.
30. Historia general, III, 355.

A paper presented at the

Thirteenth University of Kentucky
Foreign Language Conference
Lexington, Kentucky
1960

ROMAIN GARY: WITNESS TO AN ERA

By Andrée M. Kail, University of Colorado

Les racines du ciel, Prix Goncourt 1957, is the latest novel by Mr. Romain Gary, at present Consul Général de France in Los Angeles. In the best tradition of numerous Frenchmen in the diplomatic service, Mr. Gary has devoted part of his time to writing. He launched both his diplomatic and literary careers in 1945 when he published Education européenne while at the French Embassy in Sofia. From then on, although engaged in diplomatic work in Berne, at the U.N., in London, and finally in Los Angeles, he published a series of novels: Tulipes in 1946, Le grand vestiaire in 1948, Les couleurs du jour in 1952, and Les racines du ciel in 1956.

One may quickly realize that the literary production of Romain Gary was begun at the end of World War II and extended through the crucial post-war period. If we look for testimony of the impact of the tragedy of the years 1939-1945 on our present generation, the writings of Romain Gary will be of the utmost interest. The author has been a participant in the war and, by training, a keen observer of the political changes on the international scene. The very qualities of this testimony, however, could very well lessen the interest in the novels for a non-European reader. To paraphrase a remark by Angus Wilson about Camus' works, "the past weighs heavily on the work"¹ of Romain Gary; quite an important part of its appeal lies in the vivid picture of the underground and of the confused and sordid aspects of the postwar period in Europe. Conditioning oneself to this experience may tax the imagination of those who have not been actors or victims in this particular phase of the drama.

Romain Gary, however, has not limited himself to being a reporter. He wishes to draw a universally valid conclusion from the tragic times experienced by some men, and from men to rise to Man. This is the unequivocal point of view he states in the foreword to Les racines du ciel when he calls upon the lost humanistic tradition as the source of inspiration for his novel. The hero of L'Education européenne wonders if there is a way out of not only the bloody mire of the war, but also out of what the author calls "la route millénaire"² trodden by millions of human ants toiling, since the beginning of ages, at the same tragic and ridiculous task. An adolescent, thrown into the bewildering chaos of war and invasion, brutally cut from his family ties by the disappearance of his father, even deprived of the comforting presence of familiar objects and places by the destruction of his village, Janek has no other alternative but to hide in the heart of the Polish forest: "Il voulait rentrer sous terre, se blottir dans son trou, ne plus jamais ressortir . . . Mais il ne mourut pas. Son coeur battait, battait toujours . . . Il n'était

pas plus facile de mourir que de vivre."³ In order to live, one must find protection against cold, hunger, and hostile forces, but one must also hope for a better world, certainly for the end of the war, and most specifically for an end to hatred, intolerance, and misunderstanding.

It was the very possibility of this hope, which had helped him to survive as it had sustained the moral strength of the other inhabitants of the underground, which Janek finally doubts, because the misery and hopes shared by the underground have not cemented between its members a lasting and solid bond. Their feelings of solidarity were but temporary and superficial. They were united against the hostile world around them, the world which began at the edge of the protective forest, but they did not share any common ideal. The holes in which they crouched through the terrible winter were the very image of their loneliness, their selfishness, their mistrust and incomprehension of each other, which they overcame at times, but which dominated in the end.

In his first book Romain Gary sketches the essential tragedy of all his characters: they are cut from their roots, orphaned, dispossessed, exiled from their country in their country, deprived of traditional religious beliefs and abandoned to the utter confusion of a world in distress where force, cunning, and selfishness seem to be triumphant:

--Parle-leur de la faim et du grand froid et de l'espoir et de l'amour /begs Janek's dying friend/.
 --Je leur en parlerai.
 --Je voudrais qu'ils soient fiers de nous et qu'ils aient honte . . .
 --Ils seront fiers d'eux et ils auront honte de nous.
 --Essaye . . . Je voudrais qu'ils ne recommencent jamais.
 --Ils recommenceront.
 --Ouvre-leur . . . ton poitrail . . . ton poitrail d'homme . . .
 --Ils ne voudront pas regarder. Ils passeront à côté, les lèvres serrées et le regard froid.⁴

In spite of Janek's desperate cry, "A quoi sert-il de lutter et de prier, d'espérer et de croire?"⁵ it is difficult, well nigh impossible for Man to live without hope. Tulipe, from the snake pit of his anguish and misery, screams his undying desire: ". . . nous voulons que d'une communauté de souffrance sorte enfin une communauté d'action."⁶

Hope survives in spite of the indifference and incomprehension of society and attempts at debasing ideals. In postwar Paris, the "ratons" and "dudules" of Le grand vestiaire, characters who wallow in each other's misery, having accepted life on its own humiliating terms and hung up their coat of dignity and their conscience in the closet of discarded ideals, have sold on the black market the last shred, or so it seems, of Man's lofty dreams. "Ce que j'avais essayé de sauver, ce pour quoi mon père était mort," the young

hero of the novel tells us, "me paraissait à présent inexistant et vide de sens, trahi par tous, abandonné depuis longtemps. Il n'y avait plus rien à défendre. Il ne restait plus qu'à me soumettre et retourner enfin au sein d'une lâche complicité, d'une grande culpabilité accueillante."⁷ On the last page of this book, however, the hero rebels against this humiliating state, and, in a gesture of defiance, kills Old Vanderputte, incarnation of the guilt of men toward Man.

This revolt has freed the constructive forces asleep in the souls of Gary's heroes. More than ever the author relies, in Les couleurs du jour, on love to open the doors once again to Peace, Justice, and Liberty, and to re-create, by meeting with a single being, a sense of belonging. A renewed belief in the value of "ces couleurs ternies du vieux jour humain," which are "la tolérance, la sensibilité et la liberté laissée à chaque homme de choisir sa propre source d'inspiration,"⁸ inspires men awakening from the nightmare of confusion and defeat. Doubt is still considered in this work as "le seul allié . . . de l'homme à la recherche de ses lendemains."⁹ It does not enter any longer the mind of Morel, in Les racines du ciel.

The story of this novel is well known, now that a movie has popularized its plot and African setting. The conclusions of the author are what should be investigated here. Romain Gary does not doubt any longer the possibility of uniting all men of good will in the defense of a cause. He believes in the value of example, be it only that of a lone man like Morel, provided his fight be waged in the name of these "roots of Heaven" which are Justice, Liberty, and Love. The fight is symbolized in the book by the defense of the elephants, but the symbol is deceptive. In spite of Gary's explanation,¹⁰ the traditional beacons of Humanism are not the only lights to be rekindled. An impossible dream is added to the old ones: the dream of a complete, if slow, liberation of man from the laws of natural determinism through the progress of Science and the conquest of disease, if not of Death. A more utopian type of liberty is suggested: divine grace will not be any longer a gift from above, but part and parcel of human nature. "La grâce serait comme une mutation biologique qui donnera enfin à l'homme les moyens de se réaliser tel qu'il veut."¹¹

It would be proper at this point to compare the attitude of Romain Gary with that of the generation preceding him. As in the works of R. Dorgelès, a similar anger is expressed toward society as a whole, hypocrisy and a revolting indifference toward past lessons being the main targets of the accusation as well as the reasons for the moral anguish and despair of the truly "unknown" soldiers whose sacrifice appears to have been in vain. Like Dorgelès and Duhamel, the author toys with the chimera of a redeemed and purified world of a new moral and philosophical order. The same reproach made against Duhamel by André Rousseaux could be applied to Romain Gary. The same utopian and generous spirit animates their works, in spite of personal differences. Rousseaux writes:

Dans le même temps que cet esprit / s'éprend de réalités scientifiques par lesquelles il prétend reviser et contrôler toutes les lois du monde, sa foi religieuse est la moins réaliste qui se puisse voir, elle se nourrit des désirs les plus incertains que puisse enfanter l'être humain; ce surnaturel entretient avec la nature de l'homme les rapports les plus suspects et les plus inquiétants.¹²

It is not surprising, however, to find a similar reaction to similar experiences. In each case, has not the lesson of both World Wars been that individual rights and liberties were but illusory claims? This sad admission had to be made by men who, like Duhamel and Gary, were detached from traditional religious beliefs and yet had been raised in the humanistic traditions of the nineteenth century taken up again, after the revolt of Dadaism and Surrealism, by the writers of 1930. It would be rather easy to imagine Gary's heroes in the same position as Salavin, gripped by the same vague remorse and full of unexpressed, ill-defined desires, shocked by the realization of their lack of personal freedom. The answer to the dilemma would not be the same for Morel as for Salavin, but the dream at the roots of it would be. One is entitled to wonder if, in this case also, "rêver au bonheur du genre humain" is not "une manière de procurer des voluptés à son propre coeur?"¹³

How far we have drifted from the heroic anguish of the characters of Simone de Beauvoir and Sartre, accepting the burden of their liberty in a universe the absurdity of which they did not dream of changing! How remote also from the point of view of the novelists of the present generation in France! It is again in this sense that Romain Gary in his works appears as a witness to a temporarily rejected past, because, in the words of Olivier de Magny, the contemporary novels "sont les romans de l'homme absent. Ils témoignent singulièrement de l'impossibilité d'un humanisme."¹⁴ One has particularly in mind Lazare parmi nous, by Jean Cayrol,¹⁵ a novel inspired by the war but which inaugurates, in the words of the author, "une nouvelle Comédie inhumaine."¹⁶ This living-dead, this Lazarus wandering in the chiaroscuro of Life, refuses to pick up the debris of a "psychologie volatilisée" and shuts himself up in his loneliness "hanté jusqu'à la fin par le souvenir de ce 'crépuscule sans aurore' dont parle Senancour."¹⁷ Only objects assume a new and symbolical importance: doors and walls recall haunting memories of imprisonment, physical as well as spiritual, while hazy landscapes "où les traces peuvent se perdre" suggest an impossible freedom.¹⁸

In opposition to this new type of literature "qui essaye de se délivrer des mots et de leur donner un sens,"¹⁹ the fascination exerted on Romain Gary by the insidious resonance of empty words appears somewhat old-fashioned, although understandable. Besides, the solution of the problem of human destiny may not appear the same to different people. Is the uncontested and

peaceful possession of a free and just existence so desirable? No so, some will reply. "Camus dit; 'Courons à notre perte. C'est à partir de là que commence le seul humanisme.'" 20

NOTES

1. Angus Wilson, "Albert Camus," NRF, 87 (mars 1960), 545.
2. Romain Gary, Education européenne (Paris, 1945), p. 177.
3. Ibid., pp. 12-13.
4. Ibid., p. 177.
5. Ibid.
6. Gary, Tulipe (Paris, 1946), p. 121.
7. Gary, Le grand vestiaire (Paris, 1948), p. 304.
8. Gary, Les couleurs du jour (Paris, 1952), p. 71.
9. Ibid., p. 259.
10. See my article, "Le symbole dans Les racines du ciel," French Review, XXXII (Oct. 1958).
11. Gary, Les racines du ciel (Paris 1956), p. 442.
12. André Rousseaux, Âmes et Visages du XXe siècle (Paris, 1932), p. 78.
13. Ibid., p. 95.
14. Olivier de Magny, "Panorama de la nouvelle littérature romanesque," Esprit, XXVI, 7, 8 (1958), 17.
15. Jean Cayrol, Lazare parmi nous (Neufchâtel, 1950).
16. Ibid., p. 70.
17. Ibid., p. 84.
18. Ibid., p. 101.
19. C. Bourniquel, Esprit, XXVI, 7, 8 (1958), 2.
20. J. Starobinski, "Dans le premier silence," NRF (mars 1960), 500.

A paper presented at the

Thirteenth University of Kentucky
Foreign Language Conference
Lexington, Kentucky
1960

MACHIAVELLI IN BELFAGOR

By Gilberto Paolini, University of Minnesota

Quando si parla di Machiavelli, ci si riferisce sempre all'autore del Principe, spesso a quello delle commedie: La Mandragola e Clizia; a volte a quello dei Discorsi, Historie Fiorentine; ma raramente all'autore di Belfagor. Questa è una novella, l'unica di Machiavelli, scritta non si sa esattamente quando, ma si suppone nel periodo tra il 1512 e il 1520, e apparve, stampata col nome del Machiavelli, la prima volta nel 1549.

Il lettore si trova travolto nel vortice della narrazione e non può emergerne se non alla fine, soddisfatto e divertito. Questo, però, sarebbe il risultato di una lettura superficiale che non farebbe giustizia al carattere-base del Machiavelli.

Questa novella, che a prima vista ci par d'essere una narrazione con il semplice scopo di dilettere, in un esame più profondo ci rivela un contenuto serio e ammaestrante. Con ciò voglio dire che non esista l'aspetto divertente, ma piuttosto che il sorriso, il quale si sprigiona dalle nostre labbra, è un riso amaro, sardonico, intenzionato, severo, e non un riso semplice, genuino, franco.

A conseguenza di ciò, ne deduciamo che questo racconto è alla portata di tutti appunto per questo duplice aspetto. Diverte colui che va in cerca soltanto di una distrazione temporanea e superficiale e diverte colui che insoddisfatto della semplice apparenza, s'inoltra sempre più e sempre ricavandone qualche cosa che rivela il nocciolo stesso del carattere del Machiavelli, autore del Principe, della Mandragola, ecc

Finora quasi tutti i critici si sono limitati soltanto ad includere questa novella nella letteratura misogina. Dei pochi che si sono pronunciati in proposito, riporto qui alcuni giudizi. Così il Sapegno:

E ancora, nell'ambito della fantasia più libera e sbrigliata, quasi soltanto un gioco è la novella Belfagor, . . . che svolge senza punte polemiche e con piglio gaio e festoso un vecchio motivo misogino.¹

Nel seguente brano il Sansone dice:

In giovinezza compose la novella di Belfagor, assai vivace, in cui riprende un noto motivo misogino-- ma con levità ironica e festevole e senza atteg-

giamenti satirici--del diavolo che preferisce tornare all'inferno anzichè rimanere in terra presso la donna, che ha avuto la sventura di sposare.²

Nei saggi sul Machiavelli, il Russo si distacca completamente dagli altri critici e presenta un aspetto del tutto nuovo e originale:

Il Machiavelli è autore anche di una novella quella . . . di Belfagor, che gli storici del contenuto fanno rientrare volentieri nel ciclo dei racconti antimatrimoniali o antiuxorii. Ma la polemica contro il matrimonio è soltanto apparente, poichè essa finisce anzi con l'essere una forma di galanteria, una specie di schermaglia amorosa.³

Ed ancora il Russo:

A me vuol parere che la novella di Belfagor non voglia tanto perseguire il mito polemico antiuxorio quanto i miti della credulità del volgo. Demoni, santi romiti, indemoniati, il demonio che è più buono e meno furbo degli uomini di questo mondo, queste sono le cose che veramente interessano la fantasia dello scrittore.⁴

E più avanti, lo stesso autore:

C'è come diffuso dappertutto il suo sorrisetto ambiguo, come volesse dirci che i veri diavoli non sono veramente quelli che vengono dall'inferno, ma piuttosto quegli uomini che vivono su questa terra.⁵

Mi trovo d'accordo con il Russo nell'ammettere che la novella voglia perseguire i miti della credulità del volgo. Questo ci appare più evidente se ci riferiamo al carattere del Machiavelli. Essendo questi una creatura del Rinascimento, è naturale che è parte intrinseca del suo spirito l'osservare la realtà effettiva delle cose più che perseguire la immaginazione di esse.

In quanto all'altro aspetto, che il Russo ha messo da parte, più che una polemica contro il matrimonio, ho la convinzione che sia un attacco contro le donne e più esattamente contro la natura della donna. Questo non è un concetto originale del Machiavelli, ma piuttosto parte di una lunga tradizione parallela e in antitesi alla galanteria.

Senza dilungarmi oltre, proseguo col presentare alcuni particolari, che mi hanno colpito nello studio di questa novella, raggruppandoli sotto le

seguenti denominazioni: Uморismo; Credulità del volgo; Misoginia.

Uморismo

Esaminiamo prima di tutto l'aspetto dilettevole e faceto che lo scrittore ottiene mediante espressioni e situazioni fuori dell'ordinario e specialmente per mezzo di nomi propri.

Dalla sinossi, sul nostro volto sboccia un sorriso che poi man mano che avanziamo nella lettura si va aprendo sempre più, fino ad irrompere in risa e rimanere tale fino alla fine della novella.

Senza discutere il titolo che è chiaro in se stesso, passo oltre al fatto di Plutone che, chiamati a concilio i diavoli per determinare il da farsi sulla calunnia fatta al sesso femminile, agisce in modo tale che il suo imperio "come per lo passato è vivuto senza infamia, così per l'avvenire viva" (467)⁶ Il sentir Plutone, re infernale, parlare di giustizia e verità, ci sembra così inverosimile da muoverci al riso.

Belfagor, arcidiavolo, su cui cade la sorte e perciò "costretto dallo imperio di Plutone" (467), accetta l'incarico mal volentieri e viene su questo mondo e, fra i tanti luoghi che sono a sua scelta, elegge Firenze. Ciò non è tutto, perchè fra i tanti rioni di questa città, prende in affitto una casa nientemeno che nel borgo d'Ognissanti. Naturalmente essendo lui, non un semplice diavolo, ma un principe dei diavoli, prende un nome di distinzione: Roderigo di Castiglia. Costretto dal decreto infernale, prende moglie. Bellissima e nobilissima è questa e di nome Onesta, però, ahimè! quanto antitetico è il nome con il carattere proprio. Se il suo nome fosse Superba non ce ne meraviglieremmo, ma Onesta è proprio troppo. Questa aveva tanta superbia "che non n'ebbe mai tanta Lucifero, e Roderigo che aveva provata l'una e l'altra, giudicava quella della moglie superiore" (468). Povero diavolo! Resta solo e in balia di una donna, perchè quei diavoletti che aveva condotti seco come paggi, "piuttosto elessero di tornarsene in Inferno a star nel fuoco, che vivere nel mondo sotto lo imperio di quella" (469).

Inoltre è mia opinione che i nomi non siano stati scelti a caso dall'autore ma a proposito per arricchire la vena ilare. Il contadino, che dapprincipio aiuta e poi fa fuggire all'inferno il diavolo con la sua astuzia, si chiama Giovanni Matteo del Bricca. In questo caso credo che Il Machiavelli abbia voluto indicare i due aspetti, quello soprannaturale e quello umano, dell'astuzia del contadino. (È un'antica credenza in Italia che ogni persona ha uno speciale santo protettore e cioè il santo omonimo.) In questo modo, il contadino è sotto la protezione di due evangelisti: San Giovanni Evangelista, autore dell'Apocalisse, e San Matteo, autore del Iº Vangelo sinottico. In quanto all'aspetto umano, credo sia implicito nel cognome Bricca, che

rapportandolo alla voce turchesca sbrig significa "vaso" e più esattamente "vaso di malizia" e quindi "astuto, birbante." ⁷ Con questa duplice furberia, Gio. Matteo riesce a mettere nel sacco il principe infernale.

Passiamo ad altri nomi. Il Diavolo, fedele alla promessa fatta a Gio. Matteo, s'impossessa d'una donna e nientemeno di una figliola di Messer Ambrogio Amedei ("amico di Dio") e moglie di Buonaiuto Tebalducci, che, volendo farla guarire, aiuta il suocero a pagare la somma di cinquecento fiorini.

Consideriamo ora l'umorismo machiavellico in altri aspetti. Nella lettura del "Natura Gallorum" e del "Ritratto di cose di Francia," ci rendiamo conto che questi non è amante dei Francesi e questo sentimento di avversione lo troviamo velatamente in questa novella. Le due ragazze presso le quali Rodrigo trova rifugio, sono francesi. Figlie, l'una di Carlo I d'Angiò (1220 +1285) che stimolato dal papa Urbano IV attaccò e sconfisse re Manfredi nella battaglia di Benevento nel 1266, usurpando così il trono di Napoli; e l'altra di Luigi IX (1226+1270), re di Francia, e fratello di Carlo I d'Angiò. (Machiavelli, dice Luigi VII, però come risulta da fatti storici e altre fonti, non poteva essere altri che Luigi IX. ⁸ Dato che questi è San Luigi di Francia, credo che il Machiavelli abbia volontariamente creato l'anacronismo, evitando così di metterci di mezzo i santi. Dice il proverbio: Scherza con i fanti ma lascia stare i santi.)

Senza dilungarci oltre, passiamo al finale della novella. La geniale risposta di Gio. Matteo all'interrogante diavolo, meravigliato di tanto disordine, e la reazione irriflessiva di questi, arrivano all'apice del faceto. Questo è tanto più ben accolto in quanto la simpatia che prima nutrivamo per il povero Rodrigo, a questo punto si è diretta verso il povero Gio. Matteo che non ha via di scampo. Il re Luigi è irrevocabile nel farlo impiccare se sua figlia non sarà liberata dal demonio e Rodrigo, che ha contribuito finora alla così grande fama di Gio. Matteo come scacciatore di diavoli, ora è più che desideroso di vederlo penzolare dal patibolo. Così che questi, alle strette, esclama: "Ohimè, Rodrigo mio, quella è la moglie tua che ti viene a ritrovare" (472). Povero diavolo! "Fu cosa meravigliosa a pensare quanta alterazione di mente recasse a Rodrigo sentir ricordare il nome della moglie; la qual fu tanta, che non pensando s'egli era possibile o ragionevole che la fosse d'essa, senza replicare altro, tutto spaventato se ne fuggì" (472)

Credulità del volgo

Il Machiavelli vuole sradicare dalla mente del volgo la millenaria credenza in forze soprannaturali continuamente intervenenti nelle cose di questo mondo. Cerca di por termine alla vasta letteratura scritta o parlata, basata su demoni che prendendo forma umana vengono su questa terra.

L'autore pare voglia dirci che nonostante la tanto proclamata scaltrezza e malizia dei diavoli, che pur di trascinare un'anima nel loro regno non conoscono ostacoli, a parte di Dio e dei santi, che possano impedirli, pure questi principi infernali hanno un senso profondo di giustizia, lealtà e verità, inesistenti su questa terra. Essi non hanno intenzione alcuna di venire su questo mondo. Si trovano meglio dove sono. L'inferno è orrendo e con pene indescrivibili, pure, mentre la novella va svolgendosi, ci rendiamo conto che questo mondo lo è in un modo superlativo. Questo mondo con ogni genere di pervertimento, vizio e lussuria, ecc . . . è il vero inferno.

Si osservi Firenze che eccelle nell'arte usuraria, nella moda femminile che in questa città continuamente "per sua natural consuetudine varia" (468). È superfluo accennare al grande sfoggio negli splendidi conviti con i quali si onorano nobili e ricchi cittadini.

La corruzione regna dappertutto, perfino nella religione. Così che vediamo da una parte la Messa che si celebra "per abbellire la cosa" (470), e il frate, che con voti di ubbidienza, povertà e castità, "s'aveva tenuta una femina vestita ad uso di fraticino più di quattro anni nella sua cella" (470), e dall'altra parte, notiamo come il volgo diventi feticista, ponendo una fiducia estrema e assoluta nel continuo e manifesto intervento di santi, per mezzo di oggetti a questi appartenenti. Così che perfino il mantello di San Giovanni Gualberto acquista "per se" qualità sanative.

Dunque per concludere, c'è un attacco al falso culto, all'attaccamento ai beni terreni, e alla credenza in forze soprannaturali controllanti le azioni umane, le quali forze, naturalmente, distruggerebbero il libero arbitrio.

Misoginia

La misoginia è più evidente e persistente che la misogamia, che serve soltanto come mezzo per provar il primo punto.

Il dire che il Machiavelli scrisse questa novella per vendicarsi delle donne, le quali gli piacquero molto e non gli furono ingrato, è assurdo poichè ciò verrebbe smentito dalle sue lettere, in cui più volte ne parla in termini elevati.⁹ Ma è mia opinione che il Machiavelli abbia scritto questa novella per molte ragioni, una delle quali è un attacco alla natura della donna piuttosto che a uno o più donne che siano apparse nella vita dell'autore. In questo modo possiamo dire che il Machiavelli abbia guardato alla donna in generale e ci abbia dato la sua candida e oggettiva opinione. Perciò avremo misoginia oggettiva e non soggettiva.

Passiamo ora ai fatti. La prima cosa che ci colpisce è la trama stessa:¹⁰

Belfagor Arcidiavolo è mandato da Plutone in questo mondo con obbligo di dover prender moglie. Ci viene, la prende, e non potendo soffrire la superbia di lei, ama meglio ritornarsi in Inferno, che ricongiungersi seco (466).

Se ci limitassimo a ciò che traspira dal brano citato, non potremmo fare altro che annoverarla fra le tante altre dello stesso carattere antiuxorio. Ma, procedendo oltre, troviamo che Minos e Radamanto "non potendo credere queste calunnie, che costoro al sesso femminile davano, esser vere" fecero dovuto rapporto a Plutone (466).

Ora se Machiavelli avesse scritto non nel Cinquecento, ma nel Novecento, certamente si sarebbe servito d'un'altra trama per esporre queste sue idee, ma nei suoi tempi, essendo la donna considerata, in riferimento all'uomo, principalmente nello stato matrimoniale, non aveva altra via di scampo fuor di questa.

Si dice che la signora Sorte è cieca ma essa non lo fu del tutto e nemmeno Machiavelli nello scegliere Belfagor, come missionario. Questi, infatti, fu un dio dei Moabiti e dei Madianiti e presso questi ultimi era soprattutto adorato dalle donne.¹¹

È inutile menzionare tutti i disagi ai quali fu esposto Roderigo vivendo con sua moglie, Onesta, poichè risultano chiari da una semplice lettura della novella. Belfagor, non come diavolo, ma come uomo soffre e tace e fa di tutto per contentarla. Il grande amore che ha per lei, lo fa resistere. Ma poco a poco questo svanisce e l'unico nodo che lo mantiene al lato di sua moglie è la legge infernale, che lo vincola a vivere dieci anni con lei e a sottoporsi come uomo, a tutti i mali, "nei quali gli uomini incorrono, eccetto se con inganno o astuzia se ne liberasse" (467). Fa il suo meglio per attenersi al decreto infernale e, rovinato, si dà a far debiti: ma infine, scoperto, non sapendo più che pesci pigliare cerca scampo nella fuga. In questa egli cerca una duplice salvezza: da sua moglie e dai creditori che l'avrebbero messo a morte. Fugge a cavallo prima e a piè poi, attraversa vigne e canneti ma i persecutori gli sono alle calcagna. S'imbatte in un contadino, Gio. Matteo, e a questi si raccomanda di salvarlo dalle mani dei nemici. Povero diavolo!

È l'ultimo sforzo per salvare quella vita umana acquisita per compiere la sua missione. Due possibilità gli si presentano. Quella di morire e conseguentemente ritornare all'inferno, render conto del suo fallimento e del prematuro ritorno e sottoporsi alla punizione; oppure l'altra possibilità e cioè quella di venire in aiuto della natura umana con quella diabolica e in questo modo restare sulla terra fino al compimento dei dieci anni. Gioca l'ultima carta e, scelta la seconda possibilità, si raccomanda al contadino

con la promessa di farlo ricco.

D'ora in poi non è più Roderigo che agisce, ma Belfagor, l'Arcidiavolo. Dovendo vivere, come tale, su questa terra, va in cerca di un luogo dove si trovi a modo suo, al sicuro, traendo profitto dalla sua esperienza recente, cerca rifugio nello spirito di una donna.

Questo credo che sia il punto culminante della novella. Belfagor s'impadronisce dello spirito di una donna e non di un uomo.

Questo agire del diavolo ci sembrerà chiaro se riesaminiamo le torture a cui fu sottoposto il povero Roderigo da sua moglie. Venne egli sulla terra ricco, nobile e seguito da una schiera di servi; ora invece, dopo un breve soggiorno con Onesta, è ridotto povero e fuggiasco. Solamente una persona con disposizione satanica avrebbe potuto effettuare una distruzione tanto completa. Questa inclinazione, Belfagor l'ha trovata nella donna, più che nell'uomo, e lì di conseguenza si trova nel suo ambiente.

Siccome non è in discussione una donna in particolare, Machiavelli lo fa andare da una donna ad un'altra per mostrarci che questa disposizione diabolica esiste non solo in una donna della borghesia (una figliuola di Messer Ambrogio Amedei) e in una di famiglia reale non tanto potente (figliuola di Carlo, re di Napoli), ma anche e perfino in una appartenente alla famiglia reale più potente del tempo (una figliuola di Luigi di Francia).

Belfagor, così, si sente al sicuro dai suoi creditori e principalmente da sua moglie e nello stesso tempo, mantenendo la promessa fatta a Gio. Matteo, si vendica materialmente della rovina subita, facendo arricchire questi col pagamento fatto dai parenti delle donne spiritate. Come diavolo, sembra di aver buon successo con le donne ma purtroppo non come uomo.

Gio. Matteo sa tutto questo dalla confessione fattagli da lui e quando è alle strette profitta di questa debolezza di Belfagor e gli dice che è Onesta che viene a prenderlo. La memoria sempre presente del passato gli fa perdere controllo di se stesso e di nuovo fugge, ma questa volta definitivamente nell'Inferno, perchè preferisce fuggire e ricevere il castigo "meritato" che sarà sempre inferiore a tanto martirio.

Ne risulta che tecnicamente Belfagor non ha compiuto la missione in quanto è rimasto sulla terra per meno di dieci anni e non come uomo, ma in effetto ha raggiunto lo scopo e cioè dimostrare che la donna è responsabile per la dannazione degli uomini, e non bisognavano dieci anni per provarlo.

Conclusione

Nelle pagine precedenti abbiamo fatto brevemente una analisi critica

della novella Belfagor. A ciò sono stato spinto dai giudizi di altri critici che o l'hanno considerata semplicemente una novella umoristica, omettendo tutti gli altri aspetti; oppure l'hanno trascurata completamente nel dedicarsi alle opere maggiori.

A me pare che questa novella sia quanto mai importante nel processo di comprensione del pensiero dell'autore del Principe e delle Commedie. Può essere considerata a sè, ma acquista maggior valore significativo se considerata insieme alle altre opere. È vero che il Machiavelli stesso la chiama una "novella piacevolissima," ma ciò non impedisce di avere un senso più profondo; quanto questo sia vero, basta citare alcuni versi del Prologo della Mandragola, dove con altre parole esprime lo stesso scopo, ma ciò che si ricava attraverso la commedia è molto distante dal puro divertimento:

E se questa materia non è degna,
Per esser pur leggieri,
D'un uom che voglia parer saggio e grave,
Scusatelo con questo, che s'impegna
Con questi vani pensieri
Fare il suo tristo tempo più suave,
Perch' altrove non have
Dove voltare el viso

Possiamo dunque dire che il Machiavelli nello scrivere questa novella non si sia prefisso altro fine se non quello di dilettere. Comunque, trasportato dall'ispirazione ha scritto sì una novella piacevolissima, ma anche una satira pungente e amara del pensiero, della gente, dei costumi del suo tempo.
Castigat ridendo mores.

NOTE

1. Natalino Sapegno, "La nuova Italia," Compendio di Storia della Letteratura italiana (Firenze, 1945), II, pag. 87.
2. Mario Sansone, Storia della Letteratura italiana (Milano: Giuseppe Principato, 1948), pag. 208.
3. Luigi Russo, Machiavelli (Roma: Tumminelli, 1945), pag. 188.
4. Russo, pag. 190.
5. Russo, pag. 191.
6. Per questa e le seguenti citazioni della novella, vedi Niccolò Machiavelli, Tutte le opere (Londra, 1747). Il numero fra parentesi rappresenta la pagina.
7. Nicolò Tommaseo, Dizionario della Lingua Italiana (Torino: U. T. E. T., 1929), II, A-B; "Bricco" (Fem. Bricca) in questo significato di vaso nacque dalla voce turchesca sbrig, con la quale i Turchi appellano tutti i simili vasi che hanno il manico (T) Bricco del caffè."

8. Tommasini, La vita e gli scritti di N. M. nella loro relazione col machiavellismo (Roma, 1911), II, pag. 377.
9. Cfr. Lettere a Francesco Vettori, Firenze, 4 febbraio 1514, 3 agosto 1514 ; e a Guido Machiavelli, Imola, 2 aprile 1527. Vittorio Turri, Machiavelli (Firenze: G. Barbera Editore, 1902).
10. Per l'origine e la provenienza di questo brano vedasi: Luigi Foscolo Benedetto, Operette satiriche (Roma: U. T. E. T., 1920), pag. 35, n.
11. Benedetto, pag. 40, n. 2.

A paper presented at the

Thirteenth University of Kentucky
Foreign Language Conference
Lexington, Kentucky
1960

THE GRANDEUR FADES: RUTILIUS NAMATIANUS

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"Living in a time of transition" is a trite cliché that happens to be true for almost any period in history. Even the fall of an empire rarely takes place with the spectacular suddenness so beloved by Hollywood, --with uncouth barbarians unexpectedly overrunning an effete civilization and with all the smashing, burning, and raping that so satisfactorily fills the wide screen "in glorious color."

Much more frequently the average citizen thus being overrun will be dimly aware, not of an historic Zeitenwende, but rather of a change in administration; his taxes (increased, perhaps, as is the custom of some new administrations) go on as before. When, therefore, a capable Germanic chief in 476 deposed the last emperor of western Rome--an emperor named with such tragic aptness Romulus Augustulus--and assumed the rulership of what had in effect been the diocese of Italy, we may well doubt whether every citizen fully appreciated the significance of the event.

There had been over a century of troubles and long periods of anarchy ever since causes not fully known to us produced pressures in Central Asia that pushed Huns against Ostrogoths, Visigoths and Vandals, and thus caused the tribes of Germany to besiege the gates of the eastern half of the Roman Empire and to burst through the walls of the western half. The two halves had been in theory a dual monarchy for the past hundred years and had entertained relations that varied between cordiality, correctness, and barely concealed hostility. Goths and Vandals, at any rate, were no sudden newcomers, nor were they mere hit-and-run looters. More often they wanted to settle within the confines of the Empire; some of them were Christians (of the Arian persuasion, to be sure), and, for a consideration, of course, they had been willing to defend the realm and pay outward homage to the emperors. Thus, only one human lifespan before the fateful year 476, a Goth (Stilicho) had been the defender of the western half, and a Vandal (Rufinus) had been chief general of the eastern Empire.

However, what the contemporary citizen's myopia leaves to the historian's hindsight is often felt by the more sensitive soul of the poet as it shudders in the lengthening shadows cast by the setting sun of empire. This is the feeling that speaks to us very strongly from the work we are here considering.

Sixty years before the end (in the fall of 416) a gentleman set out on a journey from Rome to France. He put down his impressions in a poem in elegiac distichs of which 712 lines have come down to us--a remarkable poem written by a remarkable man.

Rutilius Claudius Namatianus¹ had held some of the highest offices in the Western Empire. He had been prefect of Rome and had held what was an even more elevated position, that of magister officiorum-- chief of the entire Civil Service. A native of Gaul, he was now on his way back to that country, not in any official capacity but in order to visit his estates or what remained of them in a country laid waste by continual incursions of Germanic tribes. His poem reveals him as an ardent patriot, a Stoic who has no use for Christianity, a man whose tears flow not when he thinks of his devastated patria but when he must leave the Rome he loves and admires, and, finally, a real poet--a vates, not a polite versifier.

He does not know, of course, that he is the last "pagan" poet of Rome; neither can he have been conscious of the feeling of doom that we, without doing violence to his poem, sense between its apparently optimistic lines. The poem is purely impressionist--neither a tourist guide nor a reportage nor yet an antiquarian's account; rather it is, if you will, a personal diary, set against a somber background.

Outwardly, the Empire had not shrunk to any great extent, though the legions had been withdrawn from Britain in 407 when a pretender set up a short-lived kingdom on the mainland. Likewise, a few years earlier, in 408, Rome had been besieged and, in 410, sacked by Alaric and his Goths. Little physical destruction had been wrought upon the Eternal City, but it still was, as it had been in its earliest beginnings, a kind of self-contained unit. The Emperor Honorius--by a strange irony of fate one of the few prominent personages of the time destined to die peacefully of natural causes--cowered behind the strong walls of Milan or Ravenna, visiting Rome just once during his reign. The Italian countryside had by now become permanently unsafe.

This is why Namatianus, setting out on a journey that normally would have taken a few days on horseback or by coach, from Rome to what is now the Italian Riviera, had to travel by sea. The Via Aurelia, he tells us, had become impassable owing to the destruction of bridges; Etruria and most of the Italian countryside had been devastated to such a degree that "the forest now encroached where homesteads had been," while vast stretches had become flooded and turned into marshland. To us, the measure of Rome's decay is evident, not so much from man-made destruction or that wrought by nature, but from the fact that recovery and reconstruction were no longer attempted. Here we have that creeping loss of efficiency which more surely than the loss of battles spells the doom of empire.

Long past the customary sailing season, Namatianus assembles a small flotilla of boats at Ostia, where adverse winds detain him for two weeks while he casts nostalgic glances at the shadowy outline of the hills of Rome. The left branch of the Tiber at Ostia had by now been completely silted up.

"Its sole remaining glory," says the poet, "is that Aeneas once landed here."

Finally they struggle northward, now under sail, now by oar. Along the coast he sees former country towns that have become villae grandes, manorial estates; then comes the town of Castrum, "half ruined by floods and time," as he puts it, where a weather-beaten gateway bears the decaying statue of a divinity that even our learned pagan poet can no longer identify. A spirit of infinite melancholy arises from his elegant distichs, reminding us, as Sulpicius, the consoler of Cicero, had put it almost five hundred years before, that "cities, too, can die."

That experience is repeated again and again, as when he sees, all unguarded now, the ruins of the once mighty walls of Cosa, or when he shelters in the harbor of Populonia. "The monuments of earlier times," he says, "are now unrecognizable: devouring time has destroyed its mighty walls of which only traces remain, while houses lie buried under wide stretches of debris."

His voyage proceeds at a leisurely pace, with frequent stopovers, now by reason of a storm, when he spends time ashore hunting, then for the purpose of visiting places of personal interest, such as the town of Pisa where his father had lived when he was governor of Tuscany and Umbria.

Namatianus expresses strong opinions, or prejudices, if you will. On two occasions, this last of the articulate pagans inveighs against the monks, once when he sees their monastery on Capraria and again at Gorgona; he calls them madmen who in unwashed filth tyrannize their own bodies; seekers after darkness whose perverse fanaticism makes them afraid of the blessings of life.

A violent outburst against the Jews is triggered when a Jewish innkeeper bills him for damage to his garden caused, presumably, by Namatianus' retinue. Like Cicero, Horace, Juvenal, Tacitus and so many others, he completely misunderstands Judaism, "that conglomerate of absurdities," as he calls it. "Oh that we had never conquered that accursed race that refuses to share the food and company of the rest of mankind and spends every seventh day in disgusting idleness, as though an effete god had become tired and required a rest!"

Are these attacks on monks and Jews oblique attacks on Christianity, as many scholars have thought? We do not think so. The complete withdrawal from society and social duties, the gravamen of his invective against the monks, was no longer a valid charge against Christianity: indeed, excessive monkish fanaticism was reproved by many Christian authorities. As for the Jews, they could not at that late date be confused with the Christians. No; the poet prefers not to allude to the new and now all but dominant creed: he looks backward to a more glorious past.

Looking backward--that, to us, seems to be the key to what appears outwardly as an optimistic, forward-looking message and has been taken as such by most students--is to be equated with the poet's vision and invocation of personified "Roma."

A "Roma" in dire straits had been displayed before--by Lucan,² where she appears to Caesar at the Rubicon, dejected, tearing her grey hair and weeping; and, quite recently, by Claudian.³ Claudian had represented her in such a state of decrepitude that we would consider the picture irreverent: she is beset by panic, starved, emaciated and weakened to such an extent that she can hardly drag her rusty harness and weapons, while her hair has turned white. Her former glories have faded, enemies confront her everywhere, and a rebellious Africa threatens her with starvation. But Jove intervenes and Roma regains her former vigor. An essentially optimistic vision of Roma--such was Claudian's image.

What of Numatianus' Roma? His personification seems even more optimistic. "Mother of men and gods," he exclaims in almost Biblical language, "who could ever forget you--you who united so many nations in a single realm, you who subdued so many mighty kingdoms? Lift up your head: whenever things looked darkest salvation was close at hand." In this invocation, which fills no fewer than 160 lines, Numatianus cites the great crises in Rome's history: her defeat at the hands of Brennus and his Gauls 800 years before; her humiliation by the Samnites; the invasion of King Pyrrhus and, of course, the victories of Hannibal. She will no doubt rise again. Now let us evaluate this outwardly optimistic forecast in the light of other passages of the poem.

The sight of the Apennines causes the poet to reflect upon the double barrier--that mountain range with which, in addition to the Alps, the gods had so long protected Rome. Nonetheless, he must admit that these defenses have been unavailing to guard, as he puts it, "her naked vitals from the weapons of the skin-clad hordes." The very bitterness of his invective against Stilicho, whose ghost he condemns to the worst torments of Tartarus, is the measure of the poet's consciousness of a fading grandeur, soon to depart. He is, of course, well acquainted with the old myth of the twelve eagles seen by Romulus, each bird representing one hundred years, so that the duration of Rome, long before the poet's day, was calculated as twelve hundred years. There is a single word by which the poet belies his outward optimism and his seeming confidence in Rome's resurgence: *quamvis*. "You alone fear not the distaff of the Fates, even though (*quamvis*) you have passed 1169 years."⁴ Time, he must have felt, was running out fast, and all his outward confidence is a desperate whistling in the dark.

The poem, after only sixty-eight lines of what was to have been the second book, breaks off abruptly at a point in his journey when after two months he has reached the town of Luna. Did he complete his journey? What befell him in his native country? We don't know; indeed, almost everything we do know

about Rutilius Namatianus is based on what he tells us directly or what we extrapolate from his only work known to us--and a fragment, at that. And thus we take our leave of the last of the Roman pagan poets as he writes with faultless elegance and impeccable prosody in a language no longer understood or spoken by the common people,⁵ gazing back toward a happier, more glorious past while the shadows gather over the Western Empire.

NOTES

1. Text and translation (J. W. Duff & A. M. Duff) in Minor Latin Poets, Loeb Edition (Cambridge, Mass., 1934). Chief editions and works on Rutil. Nam. are listed there. Particularly important are J. Vessereau, Cl. Rutilius Namatianus (Paris, 1904); R. Helm, Rutilius Claudius Namatianus (Heidelberg, 1933).
2. Pharsalia, 186ff.
3. Bell. Gild. 17ff.
4. 135f.
5. By a curious coincidence, another traveller who kept a diary that has come down to us seems to have set out on a journey that same year. The Peregrinatio Egeriae (Aetheriae), a Spanish lady's pilgrimage to the Holy Land, is placed in 416/417 by many scholars. Her diary, in Latin prose, reflects the sad decay of literary Latin: the more she attempts stylistic elegance, the more she lapses into solecism and barbarism.

A paper presented at the

Fourteenth University of Kentucky
Foreign Language Conference
Lexington, Kentucky
1961

EXISTENTIALIST RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS IN UNAMUNO

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Candid and cosmopolitan scholar that he was, Miguel de Unamuno was beset by conflict throughout his life. Flesh versus spirit, faith versus knowledge, life and death, individual vitality versus external pressures--such were the chief antitheses which confronted him. All these have their root in the individual being, whose full expression and survival inspired this author's writings. These dichotomies involved "the characteristic existentialist situations of dread, freedom, moral choice, and death."¹

In seeking satisfactory resolution of conflicts, Unamuno deliberately rejected scientific methodology as well as systematic philosophy and theology. Instead he asserted those vital responses which existentialism proposes. While adapting philosophical responses and discarding much that metaphysics held dear, existentialism was concerned with many of the problems which had long intrigued philosophers. Yet this new movement owes its origin especially to profound tensions between the individual and his environment--Bergson's "aspiration versus pressure." Modifications and tensions arising from introspection compel the ego to make difficult choices or to remain in an anguished state of suspense.

Conflict became almost an obsession for Unamuno. In his novels, dramas, poems, and critical essays he stresses basic tensions, aligning himself with advocates of individual aspiration, of emotional, voluntary vitality, as opposed to the primacy of reason. In assuming this attitude he sought spiritual support among eminent predecessors. Significantly, these were advocates of a dynamic approach to life. Rebels and non-conformists, Luther, Spinoza, Pascal, Descartes, Hegel, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, are among the chief thinkers to whom he looked for sympathetic substantiation. Yet his works speak for themselves.

Like other Spanish intellectuals, Unamuno was fascinated by the explicit and implicit antitheses of Don Quijote. Transcending the antagonisms between ideal and reality, Unamuno saw thirst for immortality as the central theme: personal immortality or the immortality of fame. He considers this the fundamental motivation of the great novel:

En esto de cobrar eterno nombre y fama estriba
lo más de su negocio; en ello el aumento de su
honra primero y el servicio de la república después.
Y su honra, ¿qué era? . . . ¿Qué es sino ensancharse
en espacio y prolongarse en tiempo la personalidad?
¿Qué es sino darnos a la tradición para vivir en ella
y así no morir del todo?²

Elaborating this association of immortality with the ego, Unamuno faces the central problem of existentialists.

Referring to the miserable masses he asks:

¿Pero existen? ¿Existen en verdad? Yo creo que no; pues si existieran, si existieran de verdad, sufrirían de existir y no se contentarían con ello . . . sufrirían de no ser en lo eterno y lo infinito. Y ese sufrimiento, esta pasión, que no es sino la pasión de Dios en nosotros, Dios que en nosotros sufre por sentirse preso en nuestra finitud y nuestra temporalidad, este divino sufrimiento les haría romper todos esos menguados eslabones lógicos con que tratan de atar sus menguados recuerdos a sus menguadas esperanzas, la ilusión de su pasado a la ilusión de su porvenir.³

Here, too, he issues his vital challenge: "¿Te puedes concebir como no existiendo?"⁴

Yet for such persistent expectation of survival he can find only instinctive, not rational, assurance. Indeed, dread, freedom, and death are challenges which mind alone cannot answer. The conflict continues on a super-rational plane: "Creo que se puede intentar la santa cruzada de ir a rescatar el sepulcro del Caballero de la Locura del poder de los hidalgos de la Razón."⁵ Faith provides an answer, but here it is an existentialist version of faith like that of Kierkegaard, or what Marcel terms "creative fidelity." "De la parte de Sancho empecemos a admirar su fe, la fe que por el camino de creer sin haber visto le lleva a la inmortalidad de la fama."⁶ But faith comprises doubt, and fear remains: "El miedo, sí, y sólo el miedo de la muerte y a la vida nos hace no ver ni oír a derechas. . . . El miedo nos tapa la verdad, y el miedo mismo, cuando se adensa en congoja, nos la revela."⁷

Recuerdos de niñez y mocedad (1899) dealt tangentially with conflicts of inner and outer worlds. Characteristically for the existentialist outlook, Unamuno rejected purely intellectual accommodations: "Los pensamientos más profundos no son los que brotan en fórmulas concretas de las inteligencias excelsas, sino los que como nubes se forman en el cielo con los vapores que exhalan los corazones puros y bajan luego, en dulce orvallo, a rociar a los espíritus humildes."⁸ Imagination, too, is associated with the emotions and the unconscious as guides: "Era la imaginación, no la razón, la que meditaba; y es lo que sucede siempre. La razón discurre, no medita; la meditación es imaginativa."⁹ This is developed as an existentialist formula of concord, a kind of unorthodox mysticism: "La más pura poesía humana es inaccesible a quien no haya pasado alguna vez en su vida por crisis místicas más o menos efímeras."¹⁰

Mordant satire is the mark of Amor y pedagogía (1902), where pathos and tragedy arise from tensions between mind and heart. At the same time love and hate appear as essential concomitants when intellect or reason is locked in mortal struggle with the vital principle expressed in emotions, will, or instinct. Through one of his characters the author states succinctly: "La naturaleza supera a la razón."¹¹ The emotions confer greater insight, but logic and science, when unrelieved by vital feelings, lead to mortal consequences.¹² Only love can here provide the accommodation that saves. But, "El amor es anti-pedagógico, anti-sociológico, anti-científico, anti . . . todo."¹³ The conflict now centers in struggle for survival in anxiety and guilt reactions.

En torno al casticismo (1894/1902) is concerned with the same antithesis of intellect and emotions: "A la presión exterior oponen, cual tensión interna, una voluntad muy desnuda . . ."¹⁴ He goes farther: "A la disociación mental entre el mundo de los sentidos y el de la inteligencia corresponde una dualidad de resoluciones bruscas y tenaces . . . dualidad que engendra, al reflejarse en la mente, fatalismo y liberearbitrismo . . . nunca la doctrina del determinismo de la espontaneidad. Se resignan a la ley o la rechazan . . ."¹⁵ The resolution of these dichotomies is to ensue through an inner accommodation, a synthesis which is fostered by mature experience: "El espíritu castellano . . . buscó en un ideal supremo el acuerdo de los dos mundos y el supremo móvil de acción . . . deseo de hacer de las leyes del mundo hábitos del ánimo, sed de sentir la ciencia y de hacerla con amor sustancia y acción refleja del alma."¹⁶

In terms which lack precision Unamuno compares this harmonization with the experience of mysticism--John of the Cross and Therese of Avila.¹⁷ But here is the paradox of an individualism viewed through the prism of mysticism: "La mística buscó la mayor plenitud personal por la muerte de las diferencias individuantes, pero por camino individual."¹⁸

Del sentimiento trágico de la vida (1913) revives earlier conflicts but goes farther. Stressing antagonism between rational and affective drives, the author equates the latter with vital objectives.¹⁹ He states simply, "Porque vivir es una cosa y conocer otra, y como veremos, acaso hay entre ellas una tal oposición que podamos decir que todo lo vital es antirracional, no ya sólo irracional, y todo lo racional, antivital."²⁰ Existentialist faith is the higher principle which will effect integration by providing pledges of immortality.²¹ This, he says, is the ultimate reply: "Y la fe en Dios no estriba, como veremos, sino en la necesidad vital de dar finalidad a la existencia, de hacer que responda a un propósito."²² This is the only guarantee that consciousness will survive.

Turning from abstract discussions to the medium of an unrealistic thesis novel, Abel Sánchez (1917), Unamuno probed the depths of human souls. Faith versus unbelief, subjectivity versus objectivity, here are sub-

ordinated to the antithesis of love and hate. It is not failure to find love, failure to be loved, which is the worst tragedy; it is the inability to love, a sort of congenital spiritual deficiency which brands Joaquín Montenegro.²³ Pride, envy, and consuming hate flow from this want of love.²⁴ This conflict now takes priority over other existentialist dichotomies. Yet fear, morbid introspection, and a pervasive sense of guilt and damnation amplify the basic issues of love and hate, faith and unbelief.²⁵

In his response Unamuno then implies the paradox of salvation through some kind of faith, though doubt persists.²⁶ Faith, moreover, is inseparable from love.²⁷ But this work stresses negative aspects, particularly the ever-present, beguiling force of hatred disguised as covetousness and envy, the ultimate cruelty which rejects true love.²⁸ The author intimates that life's anguish and terror come from want of love, because love alone can cure, save, and give assurance of survival.²⁹ In solemn antiphony we hear the chant of life and death,³⁰ although the strife persists: "Porque ésta es la tragedia humana, y todo hombre es, como Job, hijo de contradicción."³¹

La agonía del cristianismo (1925) is the most comprehensive statement of the author's final position. Earlier dichotomies reappear but now are concentrated in a struggle for survival expressed in the opposition of life and death, flesh and spirit, emotions and intellect, individual and social milieu.³² Pascalian doubt and yearning for faith with assurance of survival involve typical existentialist exaltation of intuition above reason. Once more the individual becomes ultimately determining: "Porque el cristianismo es el individualismo radical Como la individualidad es lo más universal, así no cabe entenderse en este terreno."³³ Still the agony appears to be self-perpetuating, though the author implies a final accommodation, with sexual analogy reminiscent of the Song of Songs, of Luis de León, and of Freud.³⁴

Sex is equated with knowledge: "Conocer en el sentido bíblico, donde el conocimiento se asimila al acto de la unión carnal--y espiritual--por el que se engendra hijos, hijos de carne y de espíritu."³⁵ Such is his key to immortality.³⁶

Finally, in his poem El Cristo de Velázquez (1920), as earlier in Rimas de dentro (1913), he reveals the despairing attitude of disillusioned existentialists. Responsive to life's divisive issues, El Cristo de Velázquez recalls Kierkegaard's solutions. These Unamuno here includes: the need to cultivate ethical and religious qualities, recognition of continuing patterns of behavior known as laws, God, together with some kind of accommodation between the individual and society.³⁷ As Kierkegaard had stressed three phases of existence--aesthetic, ethical, religious, with significant omission of the intellectual--so also his disciple Unamuno in this poetic statement. The ultimate reply is synthesis which heals the divisive wounds of existence: "Te pedimos, Señor,

que nuestras vidas / tejes de Dios en la celeste túnica, / sobre el telar de vida eterna."³⁸ Through a kind of mystical union with God, man achieves his ultimate realization. Earlier in this same poem, speaking of la divina hambre, he exalts the Eucharist as a supreme bond of union, a final resolution of conflict.³⁹

However, confronted by this consummation of man's subjectivity, his individualism and dynamic inner urge lead to no systematic solution. Instead, the very forces of existence here constitute their own response. The ego, immediately experienced and experiencing, appears as motion, vitality, free aspiration that defies reduction to categories. Only in the sanctuary of individual consciousness--in man's heart, emotions, imagination--can this author discover an uneasy equilibrium of antithetical forces. It is on this account that existentialism is described as "a concealed way of salvation rather than . . . a serious effort at rational analysis."⁴⁰ Hence, too, it is defined in terms of problems and methods rather than doctrines.⁴¹

Yet despite their antipathy to metaphysics, the existentialists, and specifically Unamuno, were compelled to take cognizance of ideal methodology. Similarly they reacted consciously to Hegelian dialectics which they rejected--the juxtaposition of subjective and objective reality. But, "Leaving to technical science the objective world, existentialist philosophy . . . reserves for itself the realm of the subjective."⁴² During his mature years Unamuno wrestled with the Danish philosopher's riddle: "What is the self that remains if a person has lost the whole world and yet not lost himself?"⁴³ But man's very isolation receives a theological confirmation of survival.

In San Manuel Bueno, mártir (1933), Unamuno seems to advocate a categorical imperative of credulity, though he will not accept orthodox religious creeds: "--El contento con que tu madre se muera--me dijo--será su eterna vida."⁴⁴ Such is the quasi-faith of the good priest: "Yo estoy para hacer vivir a las almas de mis feligreses, para hacerles felices, para hacerles que se sueñen inmortales y no para matarles."⁴⁵ So too, with naïve blasphemy he remarks while administering holy communion: "No hay más vida eterna que ésta . . . que la sueñen eterna . . . eterna de unos pocos años" ⁴⁶ Thus in Unamuno doubt and dread persisted side by side with the will to believe.

NOTES

1. James Collins, The Existentialists (Chicago: Regnery, 1952), p. 121.
2. Miguel de Unamuno, Vida de don Quijote y Sancho, 11th ed., Colección Austral (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1958), p. 24.
3. Ibid., p. 12.
4. Ibid., p. 180.
5. Ibid., p. 13.
6. Ibid., p. 41.
7. Ibid., p. 68.

8. Miguel de Unamuno, Recuerdos de niñez y mocedad, 2nd edition, Colección Austral (Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe, 1945), p. 106.
9. Ibid., pp. 107-108. 10. Ibid., p. 106.
11. Miguel de Unamuno, Amor y pedagogía, 3rd ed., Colección Austral (Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe, 1944), p. 88.
12. Ibid., pp. 135, 141-42.
13. Ibid., p. 117.
14. Miguel de Unamuno, En torno al casticismo, 3rd ed., Colección Austral (Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe, 1952), p. 75.
15. Ibid., p. 76. 16. Ibid., p. 102.
17. Ibid., pp. 103-105. 18. Ibid., p. 119.
19. Miguel de Unamuno, Del sentimiento trágico de la vida, 10th ed., Colección Austral (Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe, 1952), pp. 92-94.
20. Ibid., p. 34. 21. Ibid., p. 56.
22. Ibid., p. 126.
23. Miguel de Unamuno, Abel Sánchez, 2nd ed., Colección Austral (Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe, 1943), p. 40.
24. Ibid., pp. 134-135, 151.
25. Ibid.; Cf. pp. 143, 150-151; 39, 62, 130; 47, 114-115, 121, 148.
26. Ibid., pp. 43, 63, 73.
27. Ibid., pp. 62-63.
28. Ibid., pp. 81-82, 91, 116, 152.
29. Ibid., pp. 62-63.
30. Ibid., pp. 121, 110. 31. Ibid., p. 120.
32. Miguel de Unamuno, La agonía del cristianismo, 3rd ed., Colección Austral (Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe, 1950), pp. 31, 45-47, 93-97.
33. Ibid., p. 93.
34. Ibid., pp. 30-32, 35-37.
35. Ibid., p. 55. 36. Ibid., pp. 68-76, 121-126.
37. Collins, pp. 8-10.
38. Quoted in Poesía religiosa española, ed. Lázaro Montero (Zaragoza: Ebro, 1950), p. 310.
39. Ibid., p. 149. 40. Collins, p. 3.
41. Ibid., p. 189.
42. Roger Troisfontaines, "What is Existentialism?", Thought, XXXII, 127 (Winter, 1957-58), 521.
43. Søren Kierkegaard, Papirer, eds. P. A. Heiberg, V. Kuhr, E. Torsting, IV, C (Copenhagen, 1909), 77.
44. Quoted in De Unamuno a Ortega y Gasset, ed. Luis J. Navascues (New York: Harper, 1951), p. 82.
45. Ibid., p. 85. 46. Ibid., p. 91.

A paper presented at the

Thirteenth University of Kentucky
Foreign Language Conference
Lexington, Kentucky
1960

FOUR CHRONIQUES OF JEAN GIONO

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When the first volume of Giono's Chroniques appeared in 1947, the astonishment of literary critics was apparent and many spoke of a "second manner." Giono himself does not deny this change in his style as first shown in Un Roi sans divertissement, although he insists that the change was not due to the war or to his imprisonment but had its inception much earlier. Incarcerated in prison first as punishment for pacifism at the outbreak of World War II and again during Communist control after the overthrow of Vichy, Giono's disgrace seemed complete when he was refused the right to publish his works. Rarely has there been a more dramatic reversal of fortune than that experienced by Giono when this suspension was ended to allow the publication of his Chroniques, which led to his election to the Goncourt Academy and an award in 1953 of the million-franc Monaco prize, given for the best ensemble of works by an author in the French language.

Although the five novels of the Hussard series are included under Giono's new rubric Chroniques, we shall limit ourselves here to the four which are independent of the cycle. According to Marcel Arland¹ Giono calls these volumes "Chroniques" not because they are chronicles of a period of society, but because they represent a new method of narration. The chief difference between these novels and the earlier productions of Giono is their subordination of lyric description of nature to an objective presentation of character and settings in the past. Although these stories proceed from the imagination of the author and create for us a world of strangely romantic mystery, Nadeau points out the paradox that this world is nevertheless "plus solide, plus humain et plus logique à la fois, plus actuel, peut-être, que ce monde où il campait autrefois ses créatures."²

A corollary of this contrast between the earlier novels of Giono and the Chroniques is the objective detachment of the latter, in which the only intervention of the author is a certain irony like that of Stendhal, the novelist who in recent years has been closest to his heart. As Pugnet has remarked: "Il semble que la production d'un livre soit désormais pour Giono un problème technique à résoudre, un jeu à bien mener, une partie à gagner."³ Whereas many of Giono's early characters, such as Bobi or Saint-Jean, seemed to incarnate the author's own deepest aspirations, Giono now seems to take lightly his protagonists without, as Chonez has pointed out, diminishing in any way their quality of tragic heroes.⁴

Giono achieves this new objectivity by having his stories retold by one or more individuals, usually of humble station, whose stupidity and prejudices

are evident to the reader. There are certain drawbacks in this technique of "a tale told by an idiot." Though it forces Giono to subordinate his tendency to verbosity, there remain occasional outbursts of lyric beauty which seem incongruous in the mouth of the peasant narrator. Again, the confusion, repetition, and occasional conflicts in testimony tend to irritate and perplex the reader. On the other hand, this form of narration gives to the stories a vividness and realism which render the most fantastic adventures credible.

Some critics have called Un Roi sans divertissement "un roman policier," and it cannot be denied that much of its hold on the reader, particularly in the first long episode, is that of a crime-and-detection novel. There are, however, merits of a more literary quality. The opening scene of the snowfall is equaled, perhaps, only by the beginning of Colline in its plunging of the reader into a mood of dread and foreboding before the mysterious attacks upon the villagers. Rarely, moreover, has Giono given us more exquisite nature poetry than in his description of the magic wrought in the forest by the gold of autumn, and particularly in the evocation of the majestic beech tree which later becomes an essential element in the drama.

However, the chief interest of the novel lies in its depiction of character, particularly that of the enigmatic hero Langlois, Commander of Wolf Hunting. Langlois makes an impressive figure on his prancing horse. His nicked gun is perfectly greased, his coat is of the finest wool, his breeches are of velvet and his boots immaculate. Although he is courteous, he holds himself aloof from the populace. Like a monk he seems absorbed in contemplation of another world; like a soldier he is abrupt and accustomed to having his orders obeyed without explanation. Called by one critic a monster, this strange man whose harshness fills the villagers with awed respect is yet capable of devoted friendship. He is sensitive and considerate of others, as shown by his respect for the assassin as a human being, his concern (perhaps tinged with remorse) for the widow of the assassin he has shot, and his gallant treatment of Saucisse not as a retired prostitute but as a lady to whom respect and deference are due.

Part of Langlois' fascination for the reader is no doubt due to the unexplained enigma of his character. Jean Onimus perhaps better than any other critic has accounted for this feeling of unresolved mystery which we experience in Un Roi. He compares Giono's technique to that of Faulkner.⁵ As in the latter's Red Leaves and Absalom, Absalom, the story is told by third persons in whose obscure interpretation the facts remain suspended. Onimus says:

C'est Giono en France qui a le mieux réussi ce type de roman. On n'a pas assez comparé Giono à Faulkner; les ressemblances sont nombreuses

et profondes. Dans Un Roi, par exemple, le mystère plane sans cesse et le personnage principal, Langlois, nous fascine jusqu'à la fin parce que le drame n'est appréhendé qu'à travers des récits de témoins échelonnés dans le temps.⁶

The critic concludes that Giono's heroes are as objective and inviolate as those of Faulkner, since in both cases their actions are unfolded through the intermediary of witnesses who transmit them as in a dream, in the climate of a legend.

Les Âmes fortes is even more enigmatic and frustrating for the reader. This novel is really a dialogue between two old women, the nonagenarian Thérèse who tells the story of her life, and her sexagenarian comrade who had heard the details from her aunt Junie and who frequently interrupts Thérèse to give an entirely different version of the same events. Thérèse herself seems to alter her point of view in the course of the narrative, and it requires great concentration and ingenuity on the part of the reader to reconcile these inconsistencies and rearrange the chronology.

Of all the novels of Giono, Les Âmes fortes is the one which reminds us most forcibly of Balzac in its blending of minute realism with fantastic melodrama, in its hallucinating intensity, and in its delineation of characters who are all of one piece, monsters either of goodness or wickedness. Although the manner of narration prevents Giono from giving vent to any lyric description of nature, the setting is extremely vivid, affording a marvelous picture of a little mountain town in the late years of the nineteenth century, with its rural industries of lumbering and tanning and its teeming hostelry in which we perceive the bustle of the stage coaches, the cracking of whips, the roaring fire upon the hearth and the motley procession of travelers. In this milieu the jealousies, cupidities, intrigues, and rivalries of local society are sharply etched. As we read, the familiar earthy and slangy expressions used by the interlocutor in telling the story help us to accept the strangest adventures as credible.

Giono, like Balzac, is fascinated by melodrama. What, for instance, could be more melodramatic than the sinister money-lender Reveillard, whose figure casts a baleful shadow over the entire countryside? The plot by which Firmin (or Thérèse) schemes in cold blood the financial ruin of the Numance couple would have delighted the creator of Vautrin or César Birotteau. In the conclusion likewise, the murder of her husband by Thérèse is fantastic in its sadistic savagery.

The three main characters are aptly called by their author "âmes fortes," moved as they are by a master passion, like Balzacian heroes. M. Numance, benefactor and philanthropist, is motivated less by Christian

charity than by his overwhelming tenderness for his wife, whose eleemosynary mania he is happy to indulge. Mme Numance with her aristocratic reserve and delicacy is truly an embodiment of goodness, yet she becomes a more human and credible figure through our understanding that her love for her protégée Thérèse is an irresistible passion subject to jealousy and anxiety, almost egotistical in its possessiveness. Unlike the victims in Balzac, M. Numance and his wife are highly intelligent and perfectly aware of the traps which are set for them and which they disdain to evade. When catastrophe comes they accept it with such indulgent irony that one can scarcely think of them as victims, for their joy was in giving and in this sense they achieved their purpose. As for Thérèse, she has given us by her own testimony an unforgettable portrait of wickedness, worthy to rank beside Balzac's Cousine Bette or Thackeray's Becky Sharp. Conscious of her superior intelligence, she avoids the boredom of the small town by practicing hypocrisy until she is able to simulate any genuine quality. Her guile is purely gratuitous, for she cares naught for money or prestige but only for the power of mastery over her victims--her husband Firmin, her mistress Mme Numance. At the close of the book, as dawn begins to break, one of the old crones expresses her surprise that after the sleepless vigil Thérèse looks fresh as a rose. Never perhaps has Giono written anything more sardonic than her reply: "Pourquoi voudrais-tu que je ne sois pas fraîche comme la rose?"⁷

In summary we may say of Les Âmes fortes that despite our occasional frustration and irritation with Giono's method of telling the story we are left with an impression of terrifying grandeur, akin to that of Greek tragedy. If the novel lacks the pure lines of classical tragedy, it nevertheless resembles it, according to Nadeau, not only in its plot and characters, but also in its chorus and alternating recital of two narrators. At any rate Les Âmes fortes must be considered one of the most striking and powerful of Giono's Chroniques.

Les Grands Chemins (1951) forms a distinct contrast with the preceding Chroniques in its simplicity of plot and character development. Compared by one critic to the Novelas ejemplares of Cervantes and the Vida de Lazarillo de Tormes,⁸ it may indeed be classified as a modern version of the picaresque or rogue novel. It relates the adventures of a wandering couple--the likable vagabond who is the narrator, and his friend the despicable Artist, virtuoso not only of the guitar, but also of cards, whose aces and kings he manipulates with a mastery of technique which furnishes him a comfortable living.

Like so many of Giono's stories, Les Grands Chemins is a strange mixture of minute, almost banal realism, and incredible melodrama. Except for the two catastrophes, the revenge of the gambler upon the Artist and the latter's murder of the old woman resulting in his own death at the hands of his only friend, the narrative itself is rather monotonous, repetitious, and lack-luster. Whatever interest the reader may find in this novel is concentrated

primarily on the portrait of the Artist, whose petty knavery is unrelieved by a single redeeming feature.

As Pugnet has pointed out, the Artist represents in Giono's work the later and more detailed development of an earlier cad, the sinister Louis of Un de Baumugnes.⁹ His repulsive physical appearance is in keeping with his crass materialism, and we remember him best for his tendency to slobber at the corners of his mouth in his moments of triumph. A human parasite without a spark of gratitude for his benefactor, frankly preoccupied with the pursuit of money, the Artist becomes inexplicable for us only in his gratuitous murder of the penniless old woman. Perhaps the realization of his helplessness because of his crushed fingers which will nevermore do his bidding as a musician and cardsharp~~er~~ has driven him insane at the last. In any event the reader, through some alchemy of the author, almost shares the compassion of the vagabond for this wretched creature whose terrible punishment has been so aptly proportioned to his crimes.

The title for Le Moulin de Pologne is derived from a country estate just outside a little town so named, according to tradition, because a Polish pilgrim on his way to Rome once established himself there. René Lalou has pointed out how skillfully Giono has renewed here in a modern setting the theme of ancient fatality,¹⁰ and Antonini has compared the novel to the work of Faulkner because of its stark, black atmosphere of mystery and horror.¹¹ Rousseaux, always a rather harsh critic of Giono, insists that "ce théâtre du destin fait penser à un petit guignol où les marionnettes disparaîtraient quand il plaît au manipulateur. Pas un instant la destinée n'impose une présence dont le mystère paraîtrait dominer le romancier lui-même."¹²

As if to forestall the criticism that the fatality overhanging his characters is too contrived and persistent to seem natural, Giono has his narrator remark: "Je me borne à dire ce que je sais de source certaine et le plus simplement du monde."¹³ As Lalou points out,¹⁴ our credulity is gained to some extent by the attitude of this narrator, a most earthy individual who is always citing his sources, either persons or legal documents. One might add that not only are most of the catastrophes natural enough in themselves (the result of a fishhook, a cherrystone, or a train wreck), but also the prolongation of the ancestral curse is attributable in large measure to a purely human cause--the suspicious antagonism of the neighbors, which drives both Julie and Jean from normalcy to pathological despair.

Aside from the romantic and poetic figure of Julie, the reader will remember most vividly the mysterious character of the hero, M. Joseph. When I asked Giono why he had not given him any definite profession, such as that of banker or magistrate, to explain the timorous awe in which he was held by the townspeople, Giono answered with a smile that he preferred to leave this to

the reader's imagination. Pugnet may be correct in his assertion that M. Joseph with his impeccable elegance and grace descends like the earlier Langlois directly from the Gonzales of Jean le bleu.¹⁵ Yet Giono told me that he had in mind the figure of his own father, in whom there was such an element of mystery. Certainly we find in M. Joseph aspects of the character which appears so often in Giono's early works, the guérisseur or healer. Like so many of Giono's heroes, M. Joseph savors fully the domination he exerts over the citizens. Yet with his financial aid he confers benefits on all, and he is capable of such absolute ideal love for Julie that all his efforts are directed toward one single purpose-- the construction of a world of peace and tranquillity in which she can escape from the brooding spell of hostile fatality and regain self-confidence and security.

In summary it might be said that these four Chroniques, despite wide difference in subject matter, have many distinctive features in common. In each case the story is told, as so often in Faulkner, by a third person, usually of ordinary or even subnormal station, and as a corollary the exuberant lyricism of Giono is replaced by a simple style which is sometimes even slangy and proverbial. In this detachment from his characters Giono's portrayal of human nature is now more objective, satirical, ironical, and disillusioned. In each of these novels there is the same mingling of detailed realism and fantastic adventure of which the explanation is often left to the reader's imagination. Finally, in all these Chroniques we find heroes of indomitable energy and vitality, more imagined than observed, moved in most cases by a single passion, that of domination, whose mysterious actions in a magic world of romantic melodrama hold the reader as in a trance.

NOTES

1. Marcel Arland, Lettres de France (Paris, 1951), pp. 158-166.
2. Maurice Nadeau, "Un Nouveau Giono," Mercure de France, 1^{er} avril, 1950.
3. Jacques Pugnet, Jean Giono (Paris, 1955), p. 123.
4. Claudine Chonez, Giono par lui-même (Paris, 1956), p. 110.
5. Jean Onimus, "L'Expression du temps dans le roman," Revue de la Littérature Comparée, juillet-septembre, 1954, p. 314.
6. Ibid.
7. Jean Giono, Les Âmes fortes (Paris, 1949), p. 339.

8. Romée de Villeneuve, Giono, ce solitaire (Paris, 1947), p. 176.
9. Pugnet, p. 11.
10. René Lalou, "Le Moulin de Pologne," Les Annales-Conferencia, avril, 1953, pp. 15-19.
11. Giacomo Antonini, "Le Moulin de Pologne," La Fiera Letteraria, 21 giugno, 1953.
12. André Rousseaux, "Jean Giono, Seconde Manière?" Le Figaro Littéraire, 7 mars, 1953.
13. Giono, Le Moulin de Pologne (Paris, 1952), p. 61.
14. Lalou, pp. 15-19.
15. Pugnet, p. 112.

A paper presented at the

Thirteenth University of Kentucky
Foreign Language Conference
Lexington, Kentucky
1960

STYLE AND FORM OF HERMANN HESSE'S UNTERM RAD

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First translations of Hermann Hesse's Unterm Rad into Japanese¹ and more recently also into French,² both half a century after the original publishing date, would indicate a revival of interest in this narrative which, according to the author himself, disappeared from the book market after a stormy controversial period.³ No doubt these translations reflect in part a renewed interest in general in the work of Hesse, that has been mounting steadily since the Nobel prize was awarded to him in 1946.

"Roman" is the rather unconvincing subtitle of Unterm Rad, Hesse's second major prose narrative. It is the story of a gifted, sensitive and diligent, but unfortunately weak and timid, boy who falls victim to the ruthless, inexorable school system of his time. Written in the author's native Calw⁴ and published in 1906, the work can be considered as one of a series of indictments of the then prevailing educational philosophy, such as C. F. Meyer's Das Leiden eines Knaben (1883), Otto Ernst's Flachsmann als Erzieher (1901), Frank Wedekind's Frühlings Erwachen (1901), Emil Strauss' Freund Hein (1902), Heinrich Mann's Professor Unrat (1906), and Robert Musil's Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törless (1906).

Although an early critic of Unterm Rad does not question the subtitle "novel" in his brief review, he does comment that the work has little content.⁵ The length of the narrative, a total of only 176 pages, not a decisive factor by any means, might also raise some question as to the genre of prose presented here. Indeed, a closer examination of the tragic story of Hans Giebenrath will reveal that the author's own subtitle is perhaps a misnomer, for the work is rather a Novelle, with many of the characteristics of the genre readily discernible.

The opening paragraphs present in the person of father Giebenrath a succinct characterization of the Bürgertum as a formidable, indefatigable, unalterably materialistic, stupid power, completely lacking in culture (375 ff.)⁶ Then, in utter contrast, the son Hans is introduced as a delicate spark of genius, appearing nothing short of a miracle in the small-town environment (376). Obviously the town's only candidate for the Landexamen, the guarantee of a free education that leads either into the ministry or into the teaching profession, Hans meekly submits to the inexorable prevailing traditions dictating his future (377). Endlessly he is primed by teachers and clergy even after normal class hours, so that his father, his native town, and its pillars of society may be honored through him (378ff.). With bitter irony the poet relates how homework, following the regular school-day, lasts nightly six

days a week up to ten o'clock or midnight--the excessive consumption of oil for the lamp, however, being the only concern of the father (379). When walks taken in the fresh air once or twice a week are recommended for the boy, it is always with the admonition that a book can be read with profit on such occasions (379).

On the eve of the crucial examination, Hans has good reason for sadly reflecting on the lost joys of his youth (381ff.). An excellent swimmer who also derives intense pleasure from the forbidden, time-wasting sport of fishing, this timid, worrisome youth finds himself powerfully attracted by nature. But more powerful even are the fateful forces surrounding him, as symbolized by the empty rabbit coop. Nostalgically reminiscing on the forbidden joys of rabbit breeding, Hans in a sudden fit of impotent rage smashes the coop (384).

During Hans' stay in the home of an aunt in the city for the duration of the Landexamen, one episode of special symbolic significance stands out. Although Hans detests chocolate--something the aunt fails to understand, for what normal child does not crave this confection?--the boy nevertheless meekly eats it, upon her insistence (388). His aversion to this sweet and his submissiveness in eating do indeed add to his uniqueness and reflect an unusual lack of will and self-assertion. It is not surprising that the sensitive boy, demoralized by the scolding father and aunt and admonished again and again that he must pass the examination, should suffer from headaches and lack of appetite. In his dreams he recognizes the tormentors from home in the faces of the examiners and experiences the horrible nightmare of being compelled to eat literally mountains of chocolate (389).

Convinced that he has failed the Landexamen, Hans, on his return home, characteristically seeks refuge and consolation in the solitude of nature. Especially is he attracted to the deep waters to indulge in swimming, at which he excels (395ff.). The father's promise to fulfill Hans' wish for a summer of leisure in pursuit of his favorite pastimes of fishing and swimming (397), should he pass the examination, will not materialize; the reader senses it. When it is learned that Hans has in fact distinguished himself with no less than second highest honors, the boy is filled with elation as he prepares his fishing equipment (400). A lengthy and detailed description of the art and the joy of this sport indicates how much this form of recreation means to Hans (403ff.). However, the tentacles of the rigid system of orderliness have never really intended to relinquish their hold on the boy. In a sudden turn of events, not expected by Hans, the town pastor first and then the rector, supported of course by the father, suggest "voluntary" private lessons (411ff., 417ff.), coupled naturally with long hours of homework, so that the boy may make a good initial impression at the seminary in the fall. Again Hans fails to offer resistance and gives up fishing and swimming, since their pursuit gives him a guilt complex. His headaches become more intense again and he is glad when

the summer is over (422).

At the rigid and demanding cloister school of Maulbronn, Hans at first continues to excel in his studies (424ff.), but then his friendship with Hermann Heilner, whose personality complements his own, leads to the critical turning point and marks the end of Hans' humanistic studies. Like himself, Hermann is inclined to be an "outsider," but, in contrast to Hans, although he is equally brilliant he cares little about his studies (448), preferring instead to pursue his poetic inclinations (443, 451) or to play his violin (451). As a token of friendship and loyalty, wearied Hans quits striving (464). Encouraged by a sympathetic teacher to resume studying, Hans does so on the sly but soon gives up all efforts (467, 469) as the school authorities enforce a rigid separation between the friends. When Hermann thereupon runs away from the seminary, the deep emotional crisis affecting Hans' entire being is not understood even by a physician. The author likens the overtaxed boy, deprived of all joys and pleasures, to an overworked horse: ". . . Nun lag das überhetzte Rösslein am Weg und war nicht mehr zu gebrauchen . . ." (486). The pathetic picture of an abused horse, anticipated three paragraphs earlier, is now repeated infinitely more pathetically, when Hans is sent to the blackboard and there collapses. He drops ruler and chalk, ". . . und als er sich danach bückte, blieb er selber am Boden knien und konnte nicht wieder aufstehen . . ." (486).

This complete nervous breakdown brings neither sympathy nor understanding from anyone at school (486 ff.) or at home during the convalescence (491 ff.). Abandoned by his father, the rector, the teachers, and the town pastor, Hans in his loneliness makes preparations to commit suicide (491). The thought, however, that he can now leave life at any desired moment once more makes living somewhat tolerable (492). Although he is drawn to the water again and again, where he loses himself in contemplation. Hans lacks the will to take up fishing again (493). His attempt to evade reality by seeking refuge in the past proves frustrating (503).

Hans' first erotic experiences with the mature, experienced, and aggressive niece of the local shoemaker (509ff.) result in much anguish when he realizes that this girl has not taken him seriously at all (525). When he begins his apprenticeship in a machineshop, Hans, as an ex-seminarian, does so with some sense of shame (526), even though he has a high regard for craftsmanship (533). Suffering almost constantly from lack of energy and from frequent periods of melancholy (532ff.), Hans welcomes an invitation from fellow artisans to join them in a convivial party at a tavern (532ff.). Elated at first, Hans is soon overtaken by a deep mood of depression, however, and drinks more wine than usual (542). He heads homeward alone, and the next morning his body is found floating in the river (544). Death by drowning appears especially shocking and ironical in this final turning point, in view of the poet's having deliberately stressed Hans' fondness for the water and his

prowess as a swimmer. In the concluding funeral scene, the forces having a major share in the tragedy appear as firmly entrenched as ever.

Doubtless one of the most striking and significant episodes in the entire story is the friendship of Hans Giebenrath and Hermann Heilner (434ff.). This relationship--and most of Hesse's narratives make use of a similar device--is of greater significance than is at first apparent. As in some of the other works, the names, or at least the initials, in themselves offer a clue. If it is borne in mind that all of Hesse's works are colored strongly with autobiographical elements--he says so himself,⁷ and a reading of his Kurzgefasster Lebenslauf⁸ and his Kindheit des Zauberers⁹ will verify this, especially as regards Unterm Rad--it is not difficult to see the author himself reflected in both Hermann and Hans. Indeed Hermann Heilner, manifesting a strong will, a brilliant mind, poetic talent, outbursts of temper, love for the violin, an indifference to formal studies, who runs away from the seminary and in the end becomes a useful member of society (484), in most respects actually resembles Hesse more closely than does Hans, many of whose traits, however also reflect the author. That Hermann Heilner's initials are the same as the author's is certainly no coincidence, nor is it an accident that studious Hans Giebenrath should have the same initials as grandfather Hermann Gundert, the distinguished philologist and scholar, who in his youth ran away from school as did his grandson.¹⁰ Hesse's younger brother Hans, by nature timid and lacking in will power and self-confidence, also suffered greatly in school and eventually committed suicide.¹¹ Hans Giebenrath and Hermann Heilner, who has a "healing" effect on his weaker friend, are in the main expressions of the two souls in the author's breast, as it were.

Hans Giebenrath perishes--and the fault is by no means entirely that of the society in which he lives--because he is too weak-willed to maintain a balance between the poles of nature and spirit. The more Hans allows himself to be cut off from nature, the source of his strength, the weaker he becomes, experiencing depressing dreams and moods of melancholy and headaches, all of which recur throughout the narrative as Leitmotif (386, 398, 417, 422, 491, 494, 509, 542). Only insofar as he seeks refuge in nature does he become revitalized for a time at least. An especially noticeable revitalization, even if ephemeral, is affected by his first turbulent erotic experiences (509, 517, 520).

Religion in its formal and informal expressions is shown to be, along with the educational system, an integral part of the Bürgertum, and as such it exerts a stifling and confusing effect on the impressionable boy. Pietism with all its narrow-mindedness, naïveté, and stubbornness, is presented in the person of Hans' genuine friend, shoemaker Flaig, at the one extreme of the religious gamut (382, 384, 390, 414, 423), and at the other extreme is the liberal town pastor who, despite his intellect and scholarship, lacks the capacity and skill for a "theology of the heart" (383, 384, 390, 410, 412, 491). In a sense these

two men also represent the two poles of nature and spirit. On the whole, with neither one striking a happy balance between the extremes, the shoemaker, living closer to nature, fares much better than the modernist clergyman, whose name is not even mentioned, even though he appears repeatedly. Simple and sincere, yet intelligent, Flaig, reflecting no doubt Hesse's admiration for the mystic Jakob Boehme, also a shoemaker,¹² is treated with much sympathy, although the ignorance in which he glories is by no means condoned. At the other pole, it is deplored that the "dreamy mysticism" which can bridge the abysses of scientific knowledge is banished from the scholarly environs of the town pastor's study. Because of, or in spite of, these religious currents, Hans Giebenrath is able to experience in his daydreams, while he studies the Greek New Testament, Christ as a beautiful incarnation of love (470).

Unterm Rad is replete with beautiful nature scenes and excellent descriptions of small-town life, reflecting very obviously the poet's intimate relationship with nature, love for his native Calw, and mixed feelings towards its people.

Hesse's repeated, lengthy descriptions of the delights and the excitement of an afternoon of fishing and his accurate detailing of the techniques and skills of this sport by far surpass those of the renowned Isaak Walton (382, 396, 400, 403, 409, 498).

Life in the seminary, with all its rigid discipline, camaraderie, frictions between students and between students and teachers, extra-curricular activities, special observances and celebrations, is rendered in detail with compelling realism. A photographic view into a machineshop is given and also an insight into the craft and into the character of the artisans.

Hans' attempts to escape into the past result in lengthy descriptions of the boy's earlier jaunts to the other side of the railroad tracks, the section of the town called "Zum Falken." The people and their way of life there, as experienced by Hans, are given faithfully and in detail.

Dialogues occur frequently and are distinguished by their naturalness, realism, and simplicity, with the father (398), the rector (419), the teacher (467), the shoemaker (414), the pastor (383ff.), or the mechanic (520ff.) speaking as might be expected. The language, however, is in high German, except for one single instance in the cider-pressing scene (506ff.).

The prevailing tone throughout the work is on the whole depressing and melancholy but varies somewhat according to the situations. There is nothing but bitter sarcasm for the leaders of the Bürgertum and its institutions. Yet the simple townspeople are treated with gentle, benevolent irony (496ff.), and, of course, Hans Giebenrath and Hermann Heilner enjoy the author's undivided

sympathy. Humor in this work is very limited; in one instance, a scene in which a completely untalented seminarian is prodded by fellow students to render a violin solo, the humor is tempered with a good measure of pathos (454).

In the character portrayals in Unterm Rad, Hesse concentrates on the inner man at the expense of the outer appearance. In no case does he achieve plasticity, not even in the case of Hans Giebenrath, next to whom all personalities are of minor importance and accordingly are but adequately developed. With infinite tenderness and compassion Hesse gives insight into the innermost recesses of Hans' troubled soul and painstakingly records his emotional reactions to the world around him, so that the reader cannot fail to sense the affinity between the author and his creation.

Style is considered to be at its best when the language blends with the form without being conspicuous by itself. In this respect Hesse has been eminently successful; he ably adapts the language to the situation.

The first three paragraphs of Unterm Rad present a brief, yet inclusive, portrayal of the typical Philister in the person of father Giebenrath. A terse staccato-like effect is achieved here by a series of simple short sentences beginning with the third person singular pronoun: "Er besass . . . ; Er trank . . . ; Er unternahm . . . ; Er schimpfte . . . ; Er war . . . ; Er rauchte . . ." These are followed by a similar series beginning with sein: "Sein inneres Leben . . . ; Seine geistigen Fähigkeiten . . . ; Seine Lektüre"

The sarcasm with which Hesse has drawn this epitome of bourgeois culture is mild in comparison with the bitterness with which he describes the typical school teacher (417ff.) who takes great joy in resolutely crushing a child's natural instincts, while imparting knowledge to him. Such a teacher sees his task likened to the taming of a crude force of nature:

Er (der Mensch) ist ein von unbekannten
Berge herbrechender Strom und ist ein Urwald
ohne Weg und Ordnung. Und wie ein Urwald
gelichtet und gereinigt und gewaltsam eingeschränkt
werden muss, so muss die Schule den natürlichen
Menschen zerbrechen, besiegen, und gewaltsam
einschränken . . . (418).

Hesse's skill in the use of metaphor is evident also in the infinitely tender scene of Hans falling asleep over his books late at night: "Er war in den Kleidern eingeschlafen, und die leise, mütterliche Hand des Schlummers ebnete die Wogen in seinem unruhigen Kinderherzen und löschten die kleinen Falten auf seiner hübschen Stirn . . ." (386). In another metaphor thoughts of suicide appear to Hans as " . . . ein anderes Gespenst als trügerischer

Tröster . . ." (491). Again Hesse uses metaphor to advantage in describing the crushed boy seeking refuge in memories of the past:

Sein um die Kindheit bestohlenes Gemüt floh jetzt mit plötzlich ausbrechender Sehnsucht in jene schönen dämmernden Jahre zurück und irrte verzaubert in einem Wald von Erinnerungen umher, deren Stärke und Deutlichkeit vielleicht krankhaft war. Er erlebte sie alle mit nicht weniger Wärme und Leidenschaft, als er sie früher in Wirklichkeit erlebt hatte; die betrogene und vergewaltigte Kindheit brach wie eine lang gehemmte Quelle in ihm auf.

Wenn ein Baum entgipfelt wird, treibt er gern in Wurzelnähe neue Sprossen hervor, und so kehrt oft auch eine Seele, die in der Blüte krank wurde und verdarb, in die frühlinghafte Zeit der Anfänge und ahnungsvollen Kindheit zurück, als könnte sie dort neue Hoffnungen entdecken und den abgebrochenen Lebensfaden aufs neue anknüpfen. Die Wurzelsprossen geilen saftig und eilig auf, aber es ist ein Scheinleben, und es wird nie wieder ein rechter Baum daraus.

Auch Hans Giebenrath erging es so . . . (495).

The emotional and physical experience of Hans' first kiss is captured with all its intensity:

Ein heftiger Schauer lief ihm über den Leib, als er mit scheuen Lippen den Mund des Mädchens berührte. Er zitterte augenblicklich wieder zurück, aber sie hatte seinen Kopf mit den Händen umfasst, drückte ihr Gesicht in seines und liess seine Lippen nicht los. Er fühlte ihren Mund brennen, er fühlte ihn sich anpressen und gierig festsaugen, als wolle er ihm das Leben austrinken. Eine tiefe Schwäche überkam ihn; noch ehe die fremden Lippen von ihm liessen, verwandelte die zitternde Lust sich in Todesmüdigkeit und Pein, und als Emma ihn freigab, schwankte er und hielt sich mit krampfhaft klammernden Fingern am Zaun fest . . . (517ff.).

Although Hesse did not take up painting until some ten years after Unterm Rad was published, his capacity to paint with words is shown in his description of fish: "Sie haben einen fetten, klein-schuppigen Leib, dicken Kopf mit drolligem, weissem Bart, kleine Augen und einen schlanken Hinterleib. Die Farbe ist zwischen Grün und Braun und spielt, wenn der

Fisch ans Land kommt, ins Stahlblaue . . . " (404). And he conveys thus the feeling of an autumn scene: "Es ging schon stark in den Herbst hinein. Aus den dunklen Tannenwäldern leuchteten die vereinzelt Laubbäume gelb und rot wie Fackeln, die Schluchten hatten schon starke Nebel, und der Fluss dampfte morgens in der Kühle . . ." (503). Hesse's ability to depict what he sees is doubtless demonstrated at its best in the colorful cider-pressing scene, which is virtually alive with its clattering, squeaking presses, its crunching of crisp, juicy apples, its streams of fragrant, aromatic, golden juice, and the fullness of the joy of life:

Auf dem Vorplatz der Mühle standen grosse und kleine Mostkeltern, Wagen, Körbe und Säcke voll Obst, Zuber, Bütten, Kübel und Fässer, ganze Berge von braunen Trebern, hölzerne Hebel, Schubkarren, leere Gefährte. Die Keltern arbeiteten, knischten, quietschten, stöhnten, meckerten. Die meisten waren grün lackiert, und dies Grün mit dem Braungelb der Treber, den Farben der Apfelkörbe, dem hellgrünen Fluss, den barfüssigen Kindern und der klaren Herbstsonne zusammen gab jedem, der es sah, einen verlockenden Eindruck von Freude, Lebensglut und Überfluss. Das Knirschen der zermalmtten Äpfel klang herb und appetitreizend; wer herzukam und es hörte, musste schnell einen Apfel in die Faust nehmen und anbeissen. Aus den Röhren floss in dickem Strahl der süsse junge Most, rotgelb und in der Sonne lachend; wer herzukam und es ansah, musste um ein Glass bitten, und schnell eine Probe kosten, dann blieb er stehen, bekam feuchte Augen und fühlte einen Strom von Süssigkeit und Wohlbehagen durch sich hindurchgehen. Und dieser süsse Most erfüllte die Luft weitherum mit seinem frohen, starken, köstlichen Geruch. . . (504).

The various excerpts of prose presented here are also representative of the lucid, simple, and forceful style evident throughout Unterm Rad and are marked by a lyrical simplicity of expression which appeals to the senses and emotions. Indeed, the poetic qualities of the work, with its lyric overtones singing the song of Hans' troubled soul with its few joys, predominate over the purely narrative elements.

In retrospect the question of the genre to which Unterm Rad belongs appears even more complicated. Economy and concentration, usually associated with the Novelle, are certainly not characteristic of this work, for Hesse's discerning eye takes note of everything and he fails to resist putting in writing what he sees and feels. Omission of some episodes, for instance, the

Zum Falken reminiscences, might have resulted in greater unity. It is true, nonetheless, that whatever the poet is discussing or describing is of interest to the reader, not for its own sake, but because of the manner in which the poet relates it.

That interest in the Novelle as a genre is very much alive today is indicated by the numerous articles that have appeared in books and scholarly journals in recent decades. Two things are obvious from a survey of this literature, namely, that the theory of the Novelle needs constant revision as each age makes its contribution, and that there prevails considerable diversity of opinions.

A recent somewhat flexible, yet inclusive, definition of the Novelle, cautiously called by its author a "minimum definition," is given by E. K. Bennett: "A Novelle is a narrative in prose, usually shorter than a novel, dealing with one particular situation, conflict, event, or aspect of a personality; it narrates something 'new' in the sense of something unusual or striking."¹³ Summing up the most pertinent aspects of the Novelle as pointed out by critics and scholars up to the publishing of his book in 1949, Bennett elaborates on this definition at length, showing that he occupies a moderate position between radical poles.¹⁴ Without reiterating this long definition, but with reference to it, it will be found that Unterm Rad has inherent in it many of the characteristics attributed to the Novelle genre.

Unterm Rad, told in the third person, deals with a single situation or conflict in which the entire action is organized solely around a promising student who, contrary to all reasonable expectations, suddenly becomes a failure and then, after apparently having made an adjustment on another level, commits suicide just as unexpectedly. The undertone throughout the narrative indicates that the outcome of the story is not so much a matter of chance as of fate. Reality prevails at all times, and, although the presentation is objective, the narrator's subjectivity is evident. The scope of the story is limited to two years; beginning in spring, the cycle also ends in spring. The number of leading persons connected with the situation is limited to five, but all figures, aside from the central personality, appear largely as personifications of the forces that help to bring about the tragedy. Hans Giebenrath's destiny, moreover, reveals a section of the world in which he lives. The question of the undesirable educational methods, indeed of the entire culture, is raised without an answer being given. All apparent digressions on nature scenes, fishing, swimming, crafts, reminiscences, which would indicate a lack of concentration, can in part be explained as artistic means of accentuation, since they facilitate insight into the heart and mind of the hero. With reference to Fritz Lockemann's recent work,¹⁵ it can be noted that no higher or lower order is reached by the death of Hans; the tension between the forces of orderliness, represented by the school system (and with it, of course, the

entire culture), and the talented, weak, and confused boy is merely relieved. Moreover, Lockemann's observation that the modern Novelle tends to have more than one turning point, which is often anticipated by a lengthier development,¹⁶ is also illustrated in Unterm Rad.

In his article on Das Glasperlenspiel, Oskar Seidlin remarks that this nine-hundred-page work suggests a Novelle rather than a novel.¹⁷ However that may be, how much more appropriate then is the term "Novelle" for Unterm Rad! The difficulty encountered in appraising Hesse's art can best be surmised on the basis of the author's own statement, made a few years after the appearance of Hans Giebenrath's story. He said, ". . . Wir 'Erzähler' von heute treiben alle eine Kunst von übermorgen, deren Formgesetze noch nicht da sind . . ." ¹⁸

NOTES

1. Hermann Hesse, Gesammelte Schriften, "Begegnungen mit Vergangenen" (Berlin und Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1957), VII, 874 ff.
2. Hermann Hesse, L'Ornière, transl. into French by Lily Jumel (Paris: Calmar-Levy, 1957).
3. Ges. Schr., VII, 874 ff.
4. Ibid., IV, "Gedenkblätter," 618.
5. Gerhard Böhme, "Kritik über Unterm Rad u. Diesseits," Eckart, Ein deutsches Literaturblatt, 1. Jahrgang (Berlin, 1906-07), 678.
6. Page references are to Unterm Rad in Gesammelte Schriften, I, 373ff.
7. Ges. Schr. VII, "Betrachtungen," 874ff.
8. Ibid., IV, 469ff.
9. Ibid., 449.
10. Ibid., 454; VII, 442, 830.
11. Ibid., VII, 931.
12. Ibid., VII, "Jakob Boehmes Berufung," 272ff.
13. Edwin K. Bennett, A History of the German Novelle from Goethe to Thomas Mann (Cambridge University Press, 1949), p. 1.
14. Ibid., pp. 18ff.
15. Fritz Lockemann, Gestalt und Wandlungen der deutschen Novelle, Geschichte einer literarischen Gattung im neunzehnten und zwanzigsten Jahrhundert (München: Max Hueber Verlag, 1957), pp. 14ff.
16. Ibid.
17. Oskar Seidlin, "Hermann Hesses Glasperlenspiel," Germanic Review, XXIII, 4, (Dec. 1948), 263ff.
18. W. Schaefer, "Nachbarn" in Die neue Rundschau, XX. Jahrgang d. freien Bühne, II. Band (Berlin: S. Fischer Verlag, 1909), 782ff.

A paper presented at the

Thirteenth University of Kentucky
Foreign Language Conference
Lexington, Kentucky
1960

RECENT BOOKS IN THE FIELD OF ROMANCE
LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

Dámaso Alonso, Stephen Reckert. Vida y obra de Medrano. II: Edición crítica de sus obras. Madrid, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1958. Pp. 432. 150 ptas.

The authors have now completed their comprehensive study of the life and works of Medrano.

Paul Bois. Les Paysans de l'Quest. Le Mans, Imprimerie Maurice Vilaire, 1960. Pp. xix+716.

The importance of this bulky, technical volume lies in the new light it sheds on a whole segment of French history and contemporary French behavior. What actually motivated the peasants of the conservative bocage country of western France to break with the central government during and following the Revolution? It was not, as Bois shows, subservience to their noble landlords, but rather their antagonism to the urban population which held economic control of the region. The Vendée Wars are made fully comprehensible to the patient reader.

Gerda Blumenthal. André Malraux: The Conquest of Dread. Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1960. Pp. xii+159. \$4.

Blumenthal follows Malraux's evolution from a position of political revolt to the creative rebellion of the artist.

Jules Brody. Boileau and Longin. Genève, E. Droz, 1958. Pp. 164.

The author's argument is that Boileau was prompted to translate Le Traité de Sublime out of sympathy for Longin's thesis. Relying primarily on a re-interpretation of the language of the seventeenth century, Brody demonstrates the essential harmony (!) of the doctrines of Boileau and Longin. Far from being the exclusive apostle of reason and the slave of literary rules, Boileau recognizes the existence of an indefinable quality which contributes to the perfect, "sublime" work.

A. E. Carter. The Idea of Decadence in French Literature, 1830-1900. Toronto, University of Toronto Romance Series, No. 3, 1958. Pp. ix+154. \$4.50.

Carter traces the nineteenth-century French concept of decadence back to the pages of Tacitus, Suetonius, and Juvenal. He pursues the theme in nineteenth-century French literature in the works of such "sick" esthetes as Baudelaire, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, and Gautier, and to such chroniclers of contemporary moeurs as Zola.

Boyd G. Carter. Las revistas literarias de Hispanoamérica (Colección Studium, 24). Mexico, Ediciones de Andrea, 1959. Pp. 228.

This research tool is a significant contribution to Spanish-American literary scholarship. In Part One Carter examines the importance of literary reviews and newspapers in Spanish-American literature. Part Two consists of brief profiles of fifty literary reviews of Central and South America. Valuable bibliographies comprise Parts Three and Four.

Marc Chadourne. Restif de la Bretonne ou Le Siècle Prophétique. Paris, Hachette, 1958. Pp. ix+363.

In this biography, a sparkling mosaic of fact and fantasy, Chadourne examines in Restif the prophet (sputnik, atomic energy, social security, etc.!) and the Casanova who confused eroticism with mysticism.

Robert Champigny. Sur un héros païen. Paris, Gallimard, 1959. Pp. 212. NF7.

Champigny has composed an original and illuminating essay dissecting Meursault, the hero of Camus' L'Étranger. The author justifies this approach to the novel, insisting that an assessment of the esthetic value of L'Étranger depends upon an ethical judgment of Meursault. The new perspectives which it opens to the reader make this an exciting critical study.

D. G. Charlton. Positivist Thought in France During the Second Empire 1852-1870. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1959. 35s.

Charlton scrutinizes the writings of Conte, Littré, Claude Bernard, Renan, Taine, Ackermann, and Sully Prudhomme to find that the Second Empire cannot accurately be called "The Age of Positivism" in France. Only Littré and Bernard seem to have remained consistently faithful to positivism.

Sergio Cigada. Un Decennio di critica flaubertiana (1945-1955). Milano, Istituto Lombardo di Scienze e Lettere, Estratto dai Rendiconti, Classe di Lettere, XCI, 1957. Pp. 623-687.

The author has compiled a valuable critical bibliography (300 titles) of Flaubert studies published during the years 1945-1955.

Lester G. Crocker. An Age of Crisis. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1959. Pp. xx+496. \$7.50.

This first of three studies of eighteenth-century French ethical doctrines presents and defines the various problems (metaphysical and psychological) related to ethics, together with the views on these problems of Christian apologists, of deists and materialists of various shades, and of moral nihilists. Crocker gives full illumination to all the diverse intellectual positions of the Age of Controversy.

Fernand Desonay. Ronsard: Poète de l'amour. III. Du poète de cour au chantre d'Hélène. Bruxelles, Palais des Académies, 1959. Pp. 414.

The final volume of an elaborate reexamination of the Ronsard texts.

Léon Emery. L'Age romantique. 2 vols. Lyon, Les Cahiers libres (17, rue du Pensionnat) 1960. Pp. 322. NF20.

A sensitive and scholarly review of the Romantic period.

Enrique Anderson Imbert. El Cuento español. Buenos Aires, Columba, 1959. Pp. 48.

Imbert's useful pedagogical outline is divided into two sections: (1), a history of the cuento form in Spain; (2), an appendix of twenty biographies of more or less contemporary cuento authors.

Madeleine Jurgens, Marie-Antoinette Fleury, eds. Documents du Minutier central concernant l'histoire littéraire (1650-1700). Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1960. Pp. 511. NF28.

Editors Fleury and Jurgens have collected 2295 legal papers concerning sixty-five writers of the seventeenth century--a volume which will be indispensable to any future biographer of these literary figures.

V. del Litto. La Vie Intellectuelle de Stendhal: Genèse et Évolution de ses Idées (1802-1821). Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1959. Pp. 750.

V. del Litto's monograph is a week-by-week exploration of the books and periodicals which Henri Beyle read over a period of twenty years. The author's conclusion: "Il n'ya pas un seul élément de l'esthétique stendhalienne dont on ne puisse retrouver l'origine littéraire."

Bruno Migliorini. Storia della lingua italiana. Firenze, Sansoni, 1960. Pp. xvi+851.

An exhaustive new study of the development of the Italian language.

Pierre Moreau, ed. Cahiers Paul Claudel. I. "Tête d'Or" et les débuts littéraires. Paris, Gallimard, 1959. Pp. 264.

Important documents and critical studies relating to the early life and early works of Claudel.

Odette de Mourgues. La Fontaine: Fables (Studies in French Literature, 4). London, Edward Arnold, 1960. Pp. 62. 6s 6d.

Here is an excellent assessment of La Fontaine's place in the poetic tradition of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, with perceptive critical commentaries upon selected fables.

Henri Perruchot. Montherlant. Paris, Gallimard, 1959. Pp. 311. 850fr.

A gifted critic brings into relief the major themes of Montherlant's work.

Leone Piccioni. La Narrativa italiana tra romanzo e racconti. Milano, Mondadori, 1959. Pp. 147.

Piccioni derives from Italian literature (and from world classics as well) a provocative theory of "vertical" and "longitudinal" novel genres.

Jean-Paul Sartre. Critique de la raison dialectique précédé de Question de méthode. I. Théorie des ensembles pratiques. Paris, Gallimard, 1960. Pp. 755. NF25.

Sartre announces an Existentialist theory of history. He defines Existentialism as an ideology within Marxism. However, argues Sartre, Marxism is in crisis, has become rigid, abstract, authoritarian. The role of Existentialism is to humanize Marxism.

Jean-Paul Sartre. Les Séquestrés d'Altona. Pièce en 5 actes. Paris, Gallimard, 1960. Pp. 223. NF7.

A family of five is gathered at their estate near Hamburg after World War II in a situation faintly reminiscent of Huis-Clos. Now, however, the confines of "hell" embrace all of post-war Germany as Sartre probes the conscience of the German people.

Jean Seznec and Jean Adhémar, ed. Diderot: Salons, Vol. II. Salon de 1765. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1960. Pp. xviii+250. 55s.

An admirable step toward an adequate, full edition of the works of a neglected luminary of the eighteenth century.

Roger Shattuck. The Banquet Years. The Origins of the Avant-Garde in France, 1885 to World War I. London, Faber and Faber, 1959. Pp. 306. 36s.

A brilliantly written panorama of artistic and literary activity at the turn of the century, as typified by Alfred Jarry, Le Douanier Rousseau, Erik Satie, and Guillaume Apollinaire.

Alberto Zum Felde. Indice crítico de la literatura hispano-americana. II. La narrativa. Mexico, Guaranía, 1959. Pp. 517. \$50 m/mex.

Volume II of Zum Felde's monumental Indice traces the novel and cuento genres from romanticism through realism and modernism to surrealism.

Phillip A. Duncan

BOOKS RECEIVED

Langenscheidt's Universal Spanish-English/English-Spanish Dictionary.
New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1961. \$.95

Langenscheidt's Universal Portuguese-English/English-Portuguese Dictionary. New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1961. \$.95

E. C. Mason. Rilke, Europe, and the English-Speaking World. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1961. \$5.50

Wilfried de Pauw. De Vriendschap van Albert Verwey en Stefan George. Pretoria: The University of South Africa, 1960.

Robert L. Politzer and Charles N. Staubach. Teaching Spanish: A Linguistic Orientation. Boston: Ginn and Co., 1961.

S. S. Praver. Heine, the Tragic Satirist. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1961. \$6.50



